BATTLE IMAGERY IN PAUL'S LETTERS

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Theology

Union Theological Seminary

March 1973

(Typed by Gladys M. Burkhart)

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The statue of Paul is located in front of the Church of St. Paul Outside the Gate, Rome, Italy

Photographed by Claudius Ceccon
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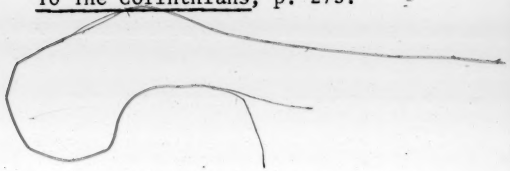
"When the Epistle is read we do not kneel but sit.... Soldiers, however, are accustomed to stand when the Epistles of Paul are read, in honour of him, because he was a soldier."

Durandus,
Rationale Divinorum Officiorum
iv. 16
Cited by Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Second Epistle of St. Paul To The Corinthians, p. 275.



"Children have an infinite, more precisely 'undefined' time. Conversely, the fighters press on. They try to be ahead of their times. They are impatient. As a Protestant should try to hurry the coming of the Day of the Lord. Paul wants us to be impatient as well as patient, because we are both children who play before God and fighters who fight for God."

O. Rosenstock-Huessey,
I Am An Impure Thinker,
p. 75.
Quotation brought to my attention by Bruce Boston.

BATTLE IMAGERY IN PAUL'S LETTERS

Summary of the Dissertation

Paul views the present as a very particular time between the resurrection and parousia of Christ. He understands that God has acted decisively in Jesus Christ; the turn of the ages has occurred in some sense. The Kingdom of God is, however, not yet fully present; it awaits the parousia. This study attempts to shed light on the present time especially with regard to Paul's notions of the operation of power. Where and how does he see the power of God, operative in the world in a new way since the resurrection, at work? What is the power which still stands against God and how does it function?

Two motifs in Paul's writings provide important clues for answering these questions. The first is his use of battle imagery. After a brief introduction, which constitutes Chapter I of the thesis, the texts in which battle imagery appears are examined in Chapter II. These texts are: I Th 5:8; I Cor 9:7; 14:8; 15:23-26, 32, 52, 54-55, 57; II Cor 6:7; 7:5; 10:3-6; 11:8; Rom 6:13, 23; 7:23; 8:35, 37; 13:12; Phil 2:25; Phlm 2. The study of this imagery in particular literary contexts shows that Paul has used it in very diverse ways. It is, like much of the imagery which he employs, occasional. In almost every case, however, it helps Paul to express some aspect of the highly ambiguous character of the present time: either Paul is struggling to clarify the operation of God's power where he thinks his readers may misread the situation, or he is maintaining an ambiguous stance vis-à-vis those who would have more clarity about the

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present than he believes is appropriate. Furthermore, there is discernible something like development in Paul's use of battle imagery. He speaks of believers' as fighting on the side of God only in II Cor, Rom, Phil and Phlm. The shift is related to both Paul's own life, which was more and more embattled, and to his need, apparent in the Corinthian correspondence, to add to his argument about the power of God which manifests itself in the weakness of the believer.

Chapter III contains an examination of a second motif in Paul's writings, his references to 'principalities and powers.' The study of these, again each in its own literary context, shows both a great variety in designation and relatively little by way of actual functions performed by these powers. Although they appear now and then (more often in the Corinthian letters, for reasons which become obvious), they do not occupy center stage as the powers opposed to God.

It is more than anything else in Paul's thought the sphere of sin and death which operates in the present against the sphere of God. This becomes apparent in the study of the two motifs. In Chapter IV, the Conclusion of the thesis, the ways in which power functions in the sphere of God and in the sphere of sin and death are summarized. Paul's persistent attempts to clarify the ambiguous situation in which both spheres exercise power, and his insistence at some points on maintaining a highly ambiguous description of life in the present, provide categories for the summary.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Paul everywhere tells his readers that in Christ's death and resurrection God has done something decisive about his relation to men and women. In some sense, the turn of the ages has occurred.

> But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son...so that we might receive adoption as sons.... So through God you are no longer a slave but a son.... (Gal 4:4, 5, 7.)

He also says repeatedly that there is more to come. Believers do not yet know the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

> ...but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom 8:23.)

Paul understood that he and his contemporaries lived at a quite particular time, between the resurrection and the parousia of Christ. The present was for him defined by these two events, one in the past and one in the future. In his writings emphasis falls now on the past and the great change which has already occurred, now on the future and the expected transformation which will happen. Yet he was always clear that men live in the present under the impact of both. Thus a temporal structure characterized his thought. He had a very sharp sense of what time it is.[1]

There is also a spatial structure which is basic to Paul's understanding of life in the present. When he speaks of "access to this grace

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[1] Thomas Wieser once commented to me that if we were to take Paul with real seriousness we would not ask, "Where are we?" but rather, "What time is it?"

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in which we stand" (Rom 5:2), he is talking about a place. When he claims as his 'canon' the fact that "we came all the way to you" (II Cor 10:14), geography is some kind of measure. The argument in Gal 3: 6-14, about living by faith rather than by works of the law, depends on a notion of two mutually exclusive realms.[1]

These two realms stand in opposition to each other at the present time. Sometimes in Paul's writings they collide and do battle. One way to speak about God's action in Jesus Christ is to say that He has created a new sphere, or rather, that He has given a new access to the realm of His grace. Men can live there. But the sphere of God's grace has not abolished the other 'place,' and men do not yet live wholly in the former. They are caught in the middle, so to speak.

One way to speak about the parousia of Christ is to say that with that event the ambiguity and conflict which result from the opposition of the two realms will be resolved. Men will live wholly with the Lord in God's Kingdom. But the future event is not separated from the present time in a static way. The future moves toward the present, makes an impact on it. Therefore, men are not <u>only</u> caught now; the future which is coming to meet them creates new possibilities in the present. Something is happening; one can act.

As I have tried to follow the course of Paul's life and work,[2] across the distance of almost 2,000 years, the most persistent questions

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[1]Especially important is Paul's use of the prepositions ἐν and ἐκ in what I think is a locative sense.

[2]Or, to put it more accurately, that part of Paul's life and work which we know from the undisputed letters: Rom, I and I Cor, Gal, Phil, I Th, Phlm.

he has raised for me have to do with power operative in the present time. How do the temporal boundaries, the resurrection and parousia, qualify life now? In what ways have the death and resurrection of Christ so changed the conditions of life that new power and possibilities exist for men? How does the future which moves toward us provide power for life in the present? How and where is God's power operative? What is the power which stands against Him?

In order to explore these issues, I have focused my research on one question: How does Paul understand the operation of power in the present? I have found two motifs in Paul's writings to be particularly interesting. The first is battle imagery, explored in Chapter II. The second is his reference to the 'principalities and powers,' examined in Chapter III.[1] These are not, of course, the only clues Paul gives us. One might, for example, answer the question via a study of his ecclesiology: What kinds of power function in the church, and how does Paul regard them? Or one could examine his ethics, particularly the ὡς μή of I Cor 7:29-31: where does one get power to "deal with the world as if (one) had no dealings with it?" I selected battle imagery not only because it seemed to offer an obvious handle on the notion of two realms of power in opposition, but also because I find Paul most fascinating and illuminating when he is fighting.[2] The military metaphor led me to consider the principalities

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[1]The phrase, 'principalities and powers,' is used in the RSV translation of τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας in Col 2:15. I use it to refer not only to these entities but also to all angelic or spiritual beings of which Paul speaks.

[2]It proved an unwarranted assumption to believe that battle imagery would appear consistently at those points where Paul feels himself most embattled, as Ch II will show.

and powers because I rather expected the latter to be the chief enemies in Paul's warfare. The fact that this is not consistently the case caused me to ask what they do represent: what power do the 'powers' exercise in the present time?

The data, method, and key questions for the study of each motif are given in detail at the beginning of the appropriate chapter. By way of introduction to the whole study, one general comment is necessary. Paul's statements are so very much influenced by the particular readers he addresses[1] that it is, I think, very misleading to treat his words in a thematic, more or less systematic way.[2] So many nuances disappear, so much of the richness and variety of the man himself fades away. This is the reason that I discuss in detail each of his uses of battle imagery and each of his references to the 'powers' in its own literary setting. It seems to me legitimate to attempt to draw conclusions about the motifs in question only after such an exercise. This I have tried to do at the end of each chapter. The conclusion of the thesis sets forth what I take to be Paul's answer to the question: how does power function in the present?

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[1]Compare for example what he says about sonship in Gal 4:7 and Rom 8:23, cited above.

[2]This is the great disadvantage of Bultmann's discussion of Paul's notions in Theology of the New Testament, Vol I, an immensely valuable work in so many ways. It is regrettable that so many scholars have followed Bultmann in this synthetic approach.

CHAPTER II

BATTLE IMAGERY IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Introduction

Paul's use of battle imagery is ad hoc, occasional.[1] While he frequently alludes to warfare, most of the terms which express it are not repeated. There is no appeal to a military metaphor at all in Galatians. One cannot construct anything like a coherent world view on the basis of a study of this motif.

Nevertheless, such a study does uncover some insights into Paul's thought which contribute to one's understanding of him. This is the case in relation to two questions of particular interest to the student. The first has to do with Paul's notions about the present time. Granted that for him the "turn of the ages" has in some sense occurred in the death and resurrection of Christ, and granted that the final consummation is in the future, how does Paul view life and the world in the present? The second question centers around Paul's notion of power. He uses the word and similar ones frequently; they are obviously of great importance to him. What kinds of power is he talking about? Who is powerful and to what ends? The aim of this chapter is to examine battle imagery in these epistles in order to see whether and how they help provide answers to these questions.

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[1] Paul's use of many images is the same. Cf. H. M. Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964). This book is especially helpful because Gale discusses a great many different and, as he says, minor images.

The study encompasses only the undisputed letters of Paul. I treat the relevant passages in the following order: I Th, I Cor, II Cor, Romans, Phil, and Phlm. While I am not certain that this represents a strict chronological order in the composition of the epistles, it is probably roughly correct. For purposes of this study, I would only insist that I Th was written prior to I Cor, and that both of these were written before the others.[1] The exegesis below will provide arguments based on this assumption. Except where noted, the English translation of texts is that given in the Revised Standard Version.

In the next section of this chapter I have identified what seems to me to be a genuine battle imagery in Paul. The succeeding sections deal with each use of such imagery in its own context. I attempt to determine what function the imagery has in its immediate historical and literary setting, how it contributes to Paul's purposes. In connection with the question as to what brought warfare to Paul's mind, I discuss the history-of-religions background, as well as the more immediate concerns of a given passage. In each instance, I ask what Paul's readers would have understood in terms of what was at stake for them and Paul: who fights? what weapons are used? who are the enemies? In the concluding section, I try to assess the indications of consistent and varying elements, the possibility of development in Paul's thought about battle, and what these passages tell us of his views of the present time and the problem of power.

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[1] I place Gal, which has no battle imagery, between I Th and I Cor.

What Is Battle Imagery?

There are difficulties in the precise identification of battle imagery. The vocabulary of warfare overlaps with expressions used in other contexts. It must be distinguished from the broader language of opposition. For example, the word 'enemy' (ἐχθρός) does not always mean the opponent on the battlefield. There are conflicts of different kinds, as indicated, for example, by the words 'contest' (ἀγών) and 'to fight beasts' (θηριομαχέω), which come from the language of games. Genuine battle imagery must be distinguished from the more general expressions of destruction, such as ὄλεθρος and ἀπώλεια, and from terms which refer to suffering, like λύπη and θλῖψις.

I have included in this study, in addition to words which obviously refer to warfare (like 'weapons,' ὅπλα; 'to wage war,' στρατεύω), vocabulary found in a context where battle is clearly expressed, like 'plunder' (συλάω) and 'soldier's pay' (ὀψώνιον), found together in II Cor 11:8, following hard on the long military metaphor in II Cor 10:3-6.

I have not included words which sometimes have battle overtones in general usage but do not appear to suggest battle in Paul's writings. For example, the verb, 'to cut off' (ἐγκόπτω) and its cognates originally referred to the digging of trenches in warfare to delay the advance of enemy troops. In Hellenistic times, the words were much more generally used and Paul's employment of them does not suggest battle. Also excluded are terms where neither Paul's normal usage nor the immediate literary context suggests warfare.

4 On the following pages, I list in alphabetical order first, what I take to be genuine battle imagery in Paul; second, words which sometimes suggest warfare in his writings and sometimes do not; and third, words which might have military overtones in some contexts, but in Paul's epistles do not. Following these lists, I cite the terms to be discussed according to the passages in which they are found, so that the interrelationships are suggested.

In the choice of terms for inclusion in this study, I have attempted to limit the set of images as strictly as possible, in order to achieve precise results.

Genuine Battle Imagery in Paul[1]

Greek	Translation[2]	Pauline Texts
αἰχμαλωτίζω	take captive	II Cor 10:5; Rom 7:23
θριαμβεύω	lead in triumphal procession	II Cor 2:14
θώραξ	breastplate	I Th 5:8
καθαιρέω	destroy	II Cor 10:4
μάχη	fighting	II Cor 7:5
νῖκος	victory	I Cor 15:54, 55, 57
ὑπερνικάω	conquer gloriously	Rom 8:37
ὅπλον	weapon	II Cor 6:7; 10:4; Rom 6:13; 13:12

[1]I have listed the words as they appear in Bauer's lexicon. Cognates are listed together. The texts in which the words are found are listed according to the order in which I treat the epistles: I Th, Gal, I Cor, II Cor, Rom, Phil, Phlm.

[2]I have used the translations given by Bauer and/or the RSV, with the exception of those words marked with an asterisk. The translations are mine in those cases.

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ὀχύρωμα	stronghold	II Cor 10:4
ὀψώνιον	soldier's pay*	I Cor 9:7; II Cor 11:8; Rom 6:23
περικεφαλαία	helmet	I Th 5:8
πόλεμος	war	I Cor 14:8
στρατεύω	wage war	I Cor 9:7; II Cor 10:3
στρατεία	warfare	II Cor 10:4
ἀντιστρατεύομαι	wage war against	Rom 7:23
συστρατιώτης	fellow soldier	Phil 2:25; Phlm 2
συλάω	plunder	II Cor 11:8
τάγμα	detachment of soldiers*	I Cor 15:23

Words Which Sometimes But Not Always Indicate Battle[1]

Greek	Translation	Battle	Not Battle
ἀντίκειμαι	be opposed	I Cor 16:9	Gal 5:17; Phil 1:28
ἐκδικέω	condemn	II Cor 10:6	Rom 12:19
ἐχθρός	enemy	I Cor 15:25,26	Gal 5:20; Rom 8:7
καθαίρεσις	destruction	II Cor 10:4	II Cor 10:8, 13:10
καταργέω	destroy, nullify	I Cor 15:24,26	Gal 3:17; 5:4,11 I Cor 1:28; 2:6; 6:13 13:8 (2); 13:10; 13:11 II Cor 3:7; 3:11; 3:13 3:14 Rom 3:3,31; 4:14; 6:6 7:2,6
μάχαιρα	sword	Rom 8:35	Rom 13:4
σάλπιγξ	trumpet	I Cor 14:8; 15:52	I Th 4:16

[1] I refer to Paul's usage only in these cases. None of the terms listed here indicates warfare in itself. Where that is suggested, it is because of the military imagery in the material which surrounds the word.

Words Which Sometimes Indicate Battle
But Do Not in Paul

Greek	Translation	Text
ἀγών	contest	I Th 2:2; Phil 1:30
ἀγωνίζομαι	compete, struggle	I Cor 9:25
ἀναλίσκω	consume	Gal 5:15
ἀνθίστημι	oppose	Gal 2:11; Rom 9:19; 13:2
ἀπόλλυμι	destroy	I Cor 1:18, 19; 8:11; 10:9, 10; 15:18 II Cor 2:15; 4:3, 9 Rom 2:12; 14:15
ἀπώλεια	destruction	Rom 9:22; Phil 1:28; 3:19
ἀφορμή	pretext	Gal 5:13; II Cor 5:12; 11:12(2); Rom 7:8, 11
ἐγκοπή	hindrance	I Cor 9:12
ἐγκόπτω	hinder	I Th 2:8; Gal 5:7; Rom 15:22
ἐκκόπτω	cut off	II Cor 11:12; Rom 11:22, 24
ἐκδίκησις	punishment	II Cor 7:11; Rom 12:19 (Deut 32:35)
ἔκδικος	avenger	I Th 4:6; Rom 13:4
καταλύω	destroy	Gal 2:18; II Cor 5:1; Rom 14:20
ὄλεθρος	destruction	I Th 5:3; I Cor 5:5
πορθέω	destroy	Gal 1:13, 23
φρουρέω	guard	Gal 3:23; II Cor 11:32; Phil 4:7

In the following quotations of battle imagery in its various contexts, the clear military terms are underlined with a solid line; those words which

take on warfare connotations by their association with the first are underlined with a broken line.[1]

I Th 5:8 — But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

I Cor 9:7 — Who serves as a soldier at his own expense (soldier's pay)?

I Cor 14:8 — And if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?

I Cor 15:23-26,32 — But each in his own detachment of soldiers: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?

I Cor 15:52, 54-55, 57 — ...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?"

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Cor 16:8-9 — But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

II Cor 6:7 — ...and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

II Cor 7:5 — ...we were afflicted at every turn -- fighting without and fear within.[2]

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[1]The interpretation and defense of these identifications will be given in detail below. I have not included the Greek original in order to make the texts easier to read. I have used the RSV as far as possible, changing only those translations which are to my mind misleading.

[2]The text, II Cor 2:14, in which θριαμβεύω appears, is discussed in connection with II Cor 7:5. It is not included in this list of verses.

II Cor 10:3-6 — For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to condemn every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

II Cor 11:8 — I plundered other churches by accepting soldier's pay from them in order to serve you.

Rom 6:13 — Do not yield your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as weapons of righteousness.

Rom 6:23 — For the soldier's pay of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 7:23 — ...but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.

Rom 8:35, 37 — Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Rom 13:12 — Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the weapons of light;...

Phil 2:25 — I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier....

Phlm 2 — To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier....

Battle Imagery in I Thessalonians 5:8

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober,
and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and
for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Historical Context and Purposes of the Epistles

Paul deals with three interrelated problems in this epistle. The issue uppermost in his mind is the severe persecution which the church is

undergoing. He speaks repeatedly of this affliction as a threat to faith (3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10). The second problem (or set of problems) Paul refers to under the heading of love (4:9-12; cf. 5:12f). It is not obvious what the problems are. It may be, as many have suggested, that some in the church have quit working in anticipation of the coming Day of the Lord. I Th 4:11 may suggest this interpretation, along with 2:9, where Paul may be recalling his own work as a way of urging them to do as he did. There may have been conflict between church leaders and others, as 5:12-13 suggest. There was certainly something or someone unsettling the community (4:11; 5:13). The disturbing element may have been doubt and uncertainty about the parousia, since Paul discusses two problems in relation to it in 4:13-18 and 5:1-11, between the references to the disturbance in the community, found in 4:9-12 and 5:12f. The two questions about the coming Day, taken together, form the third set of problems and are, of course, related to hope.[1] Faith, love, and hope are all mentioned in 1:3 and together they constitute the defensive armor of 5:8. They are all threatened by the problems in the church.

Paul writes to reassure his readers, to encourage and support them (4:13, 18; 5:11). To this end, he praises them (1:7f; 3:6; 4:9-10). He reminds them that their church was created in affliction (1:6; 2:2) and that at the time of its creation he warned them of more affliction to come (3:3-4). He speaks of the power of God which created the church (1:5; 2:13) and which still works effectively on their behalf (3:11-13; 5:23-23). Paul

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[1] In addition to these three sets of problems, Paul discusses another which is related to the problem of brotherly love, namely, a specific problem of sexual immorality in the community, 4:1-8. His comments on the subject here are too sharp to be normal ethical exhortation. Cf. 5:12f.

10 reiterates previous teaching in relation to the problems behind 4:1-8 (vs. 6) and 5:1-11 (vss. 2,3). He seems to be saying, "The situation has not changed; it is not other than was to be expected. You are in danger, yes. But what you heard from me before, what you believed in and depended on -- that is still secure."

Old and New Teaching in I Th 5:1-11

Reassurance is a dominant motif in 5:1-11, in relation to the question about 'times and seasons' (χρόνοι καὶ καίροι), as it is in 4:13-18.[1] The exhortation in the former passage is surrounded by attempts to comfort and strengthen. One of the ways Paul reassures is to reiterate what his readers already know and to build new teaching on the foundation of old.

Paul had probably used all three of the images in 5:2-3 to teach about the Day of the Lord: the thief in the night, sudden destruction, and travail of a woman with child. He explicitly states this with regard to the first. Paul does not use these expressions elsewhere in describing the parousia. They come from common Christian teaching which he shared

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[1] In 4:13-18, the problem is that some have died and there are resulting doubts perhaps about the status of the dead (vs. 15: "we are alive... will not precede those..."), perhaps about eventual reunion with them (vs. 17: "we...shall be caught up together with them..."). Paul reassures by the latter words and also in the following ways:

Vs. 17 "...and so we shall always be with the Lord." Note 5:10.

Vs. 15 contains an appeal to the authoritative 'word of the Lord.'

Vs. 16 - in the use of κελεύσματι, which indicates power and authority.

Vs. 14 "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so...." This is an example of Paul's basing new teaching on old.

with others.[1] All three reinforce the suddenness and unexpectedness of the event.[2]

The two imperatives in vs. 6, 'keep awake' (γρηγορῶμεν) and 'be sober' (νήφωμεν), may also have been familiar to Paul's readers. The first is associated in the tradition with the thief in the night.[3] It is less certain that Paul had previously employed νήφω. The two verbs are found together in I Pet 5:8 and may have been part of widely used Christian exhortation. It is also possible that Paul introduces νήφωμεν for the first time here in order to fill out the sets of contrasts he draws (day/night; light/darkness; keep awake/sleep; be sober/get drunk) and because it is the more appropriate command of the two in relation to the problems reflected in 4:9f and 5:12f.[4]

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[1]The image of the thief appears in Mt 24:43-44/Lk 12;39-40; II Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15. The adjective αἰώνιος is found elsewhere in the NT only in Lk 21:34, also an eschatological context. That is a slight indication that the term was linked with the expectation of the parousia. Ὄλεθρος is used elsewhere by Paul only in I Cor 5:5 (where to be sure what is at stake is the eschatological destiny of someone). The following words which appear in these vss. do not appear elsewhere in Paul, suggesting that he may be quoting church tradition: ἀσφάλεια, ἐφίστανται, ὠδίν. Ὠδίν is associated with the End Time in the following texts, among others: Is 13:8; Eth. En 62:4; Mt 24:8/Mk 13:8. For the image of childbirth used of messianic woes in the Rabbis, see Strack/Billerback Vol. I, p. 450.

[2]The ὄλεθρος is appropriate to the description of the ὀργή, but ὠδίν is less so. The image is used by Paul here to reinforce his point about suddenness; elsewhere in our literature, its point is pain and anguish. The word adds little here except to recall previous teaching.

[3]The imperative verb is found with the image of the thief in two of the three sources cited above in Fn 3: Mt 24:43/Lk 12:39 and Rev 3:3; 16:15. Paul's only other use of the word is in I Cor 16:13, where it is also in the imperative. There the exhortation is not explicitly in the context of eschatological expectation.

[4]The imperative, νήφωμεν, is probably repeated in vs. 8 for this reason. There is less emphasis on 'watch,' 'keep awake,' as if the Day might come at any moment. Paul may think his readers go too far in

12 Finally, in vss. 9-10 which form the climax of the passage, Paul repeats teaching familiar to the Thessalonian Christians.[1] This is a brief statement of the gospel Paul preached, stated in parallel phrases typical of him:

> For God has not destined us for wrath
> but to obtain salvation
>
> (Through our Lord Jesus Christ)
> who died for us
> so that...we might live with him.[2]

Paul does not answer the question his readers have asked.[3] Their question was, "When will the Day come?"[4] He gently chides them for having raised the question at all ("You do not need..." "You know perfectly well..."). He answers the question "How?" It will come (it comes)

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that direction. Greater emphasis falls on 'be sober,' that is: live according to the coming Day. See 3:12-13 and 5:23, in addition to 4:9-12 and 5:12-22.

[1]The following are not part of familiar teaching: εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν, which Paul includes because of the problem discussed in 4:13-18, and perhaps ἅμα σύν, included for the same reason. See 4:17: ἅμα σύν and σὺν κυρίῳ.

[2]The parallelism is clearer in the Greek:

οὐκ... εἰς ὀργήν
ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας
(διὰ τοῦ κυρίου...
τοῦ ἀποθανόντος περὶ ἡμῶν
ἵνα αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.

[3]The questions put to Paul are reflected at least in 4:9,13; 5:1, where the phrase περὶ δέ... is found. Cf. I Cor 7:1 and elsewhere in that epistle, and C. E. Faw, 'On the Writing of I Thessalonians,' JBL 71 (1952), 217-225.

[4]This is, I take it, the meaning of the χρόνοι καὶ κάιροι. Cf. Acts 1:7, where the same words occur and the issue is the same.

13 suddenly, unexpectedly. He goes on to speak about the present under the impact of the Day, adding new teaching to old.

What is new to Paul's readers in this passage is the imagery (day/night, light/darkness) which he uses to describe two kinds of people and two ways of living.[1] The key words of the contrast are underlined in the following:

Vs. 2 ...day of the Lord ... thief in the night
4 ...you are not in darkness, that the day
5 all of you are sons of light and sons of day
we are not of night or darkness
6 let us not sleep...but keep awake and be sober
7 the sleepers sleep at night; the drunkards get drunk at night
8 let us, who are of the day, be sober....

The line of thought is clearly dominated by the day/night contrast. Moreover, the day is not any day or day in a general sense; it is the Day of the Lord.[2]

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[1]The notion that Christians are different from others was, of course, not new to Paul's readers. Cf. 1:9-10: not all had turned from idols. Cf 5:3: not all would escape the wrath. See also the references to 'others,' οἱ λοιποί, in 4:5 and 13. In addition there were those who persecuted the church, 2:14f.

I take the imagery to be new to Paul's readers in large part because the terms are repeated so often, so emphatically.

[2]Paul's use elsewhere of the key words is consistent with this point.

ἡμέρα appears 31 times in the Pauline epistles, 14 of which are references to the Day of the Lord.

νύξ has no metaphorical significance for him apart from this passage and the very similar Rom 13:11-14. In I Cor 11:23, he cites church tradition; in I Th 2:9 and 3:10, he uses a familiar convention meaning 'all the time.'

φῶς } Paul rarely uses these terms. They occur together in Rom 2:19 and I Cor 4:5, the latter with reference to the final judgment.
σκοτία } σκοτία does not occur elsewhere, except here and in Rom 13:11-14. φῶς is found in II Cor 4:6 where its presence is determined by Paul's argument about the splendor of the two covenants, cf. 3:1-4:6. The reference in II Cor 11:14 to Satan disguised as an 'angel of light' is relevant to this study and will be discussed below.

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14 The contrast between light and darkness, and especially the designation in vs. 5, 'sons of light,' call to mind the Qumran community.[1] While these images are occasionally found in relation to the Day of the Lord in the OT and other Jewish literature,[2] it was at Qumran that they became the chief symbols for two sets of people.[3] In the Manual of Discipline 3:13-25 we read of the origin and some of the characteristics of the 'sons of light' and the 'sons of darkness.' For our purposes, the following points are noted:

First, the passage stresses three issues which presumably reflect matters of great importance to the community. The first has to do with the angelic beings whom God has put at the head of each group of 'sons' (vss. 18, 20, 25). One of these is the Prince of Light, sometimes identified by other designations. The other is the Angel of Darkness, also called Belial. These beings rule over their appropriate 'lot,' which includes both 'sons' (that is, human beings) and angels.

Second, the behavior (the 'way of walking') of each group is determined by the 'lot' to which each has been assigned by God until the end (vss. 15-18).

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[1]This is especially so, of course, because of the association of the 'sons of light' and 'sons of darkness' with the final eschatological war, in the War Scroll.

[2]For example, Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:15; Joel 2:1-2; T. Levi 18:3-4.

[3]The Qumran literature speaks of course of the 'sons of darkness.' The phrase is not found in the NT. It is, however, clearly implied in I Th 5:5 by the genitives, νυκτός and σκότους. 'Sons of light' and 'sons of darkness' do not occur in the OT or in the Rabbis. The only instance I know in other Jewish literature is T. Job 43:6: "Elihu is a son of darkness, not of light."

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Third, the 'sons of light' must endure affliction until the end (vss. 22-24). This is due to the Angel of Darkness who opposes the 'lot of light.'

From the War Scroll we learn that these two groups of men and angels will wage a long war which will culminate in the 'visitation' of God.

The NT offers some relevant clues to the meanings of the designation 'sons of light.' In Lk 16:8 the expression stands in opposition to 'sons of this age,' not as one might expect 'sons of darkness.' The 'sons of this age' are contrasted in Lk 20:34 to those who are worthy to attain 'that age.' The latter are described as being like angels, being 'sons of God,' and 'sons of the resurrection.' The phrase, 'sons of light,' is clearly a designation of those who belong or will belong to the new age.[1]

The contrast between light and darkness is found in three relevant NT texts. Christ and Belial are opposed as are light and darkness in II Cor 6:14.[2] Paul speaks in II Cor 11:14 of Satan disguising himself as an 'angel of light,' that is, as his opposite. In Rom 13:12, Paul contrasts the 'works of darkness' and the 'armor of light.' In vs 14 of this passage, he counsels his readers to put on Christ, as they have been advised in vs. 12 to put on the armor of light.

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[1] 'Sons of light' also occurs in the NT in Eph 5:8 and Jn 12:36. In the former it appears to be dependent on Pauline usage, since Eph 5:11 speaks of 'works of darkness,' recalling Rom 13:12. The reference in Jn is part of the light/darkness motif much used by him. For our purposes, it is enough to note that the Semitism points to a Jewish origin of the expression.

[2] With many scholars, I take this passage, II Cor 6:14-7:1, to be non-Pauline. For a careful study of the relationship of the passage to Qumran, cf. J. Fitzmyer, 'Qumran and the Interpolated Passage in II Cor 6:14-7:1' CBQ 23 (1961), 271-280.

16 These data suggest the following:

First, there was a kind of apocalyptic thought in Jewish and early Christian circles in which the imagery of light and darkness distinguished two opposing groups of men and angels. This thought is known to us from the Qumran literature, Lk 16:8 and 20:34; II Cor 6:14, and in the writings of Paul: I Th 5:4-8; II Cor 11:14; and Rom 13:11-14.

Second, in some Christian circles it appears that Christ has taken the place of the Prince of Light as one of the two leaders. II Cor 6:14 is one instance of this; Rom 13:14 may be another.

Third, Paul and the Qumran sect share the following:

a) an understanding that men live according to the 'way of walking' to which God has destined them,

b) the conviction that affliction is due to the enemy and his group, and

c) the use of light/darkness imagery in relation to battle in an eschatological context.

It is clear that in I Th 5:4-8 Paul employs the sort of apocalyptic thought known to us from Qumran. The combination of elements common to both might be fortuitous. Light and darkness are universally used images and suggest themselves in relation to the day and night contrast. The appearance of the same association of motifs in Rom 13:11-14, however, precludes this.

Moreover, there are problems in Paul's usage. One is the curious fact that the light/darkness contrast is not necessary to his immediate purpose in this passage. He wants to describe and contrast two kinds of people and to exhort his readers to live according to their kind. The

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17 opposition between day and night is more than adequate as a basis for the exhortation to keep awake (and not sleep), to be sober (and not drunk). This is especially so since the day is the Day of the Lord.[1] It is also adequate as a way of introducing warfare imagery; Jewish literature is full of descriptions of the Day of the Lord which includes battles.[2] Paul wants to say to his readers, "live in the present in accordance with what you know of that future, impinging Day." He does not need the more general contrast between light and darkness to make this point.

Another problem has to do with an important difference between Paul and Qumran, with regard to this set of images. Qumran had an eschatological time table. The final battle was to take forty years! The War Scroll exhibits an extremely complex temporal pattern, but the point in comparison to Paul is that the Qumran community has the timing of the various phases of the battle exactly calculated.[3] Paul insists, in contrast, that no time table is either possible or necessary.

The difference has to do, of course, with the Messianic hope. The Qumran community awaited the Messiah(s);[4] for Paul, he has already appeared. The shift of the ages has in some sense occurred, or begun to occur. I Th 1:10 is the basis for the statement in 5:9-10. Given the

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[1]The early church recognized this. See Mk 13:36; 14:37, 40, 41/ Mt 26:40, 43, 44/Lk 22:46.

[2]For example, Ez 7:14; Joel 2:1; Zeph 1:16; Zech 9:14; T. Rub 6:12; IV Ezra 13:1f.

[3]See Section 3 of the War Scroll (Yadin, pp,262-266), and Yadin's discussion of the problem (pp. 20-21), and time table (pp. 36-37).

[4]Cf R. A. Brown, "The Teacher of Righteousness and the Messiah(s)," The Scrolls and Christianity, ed. M. Beach, SPCK Theological Collections #11, London, 1969, text pp. 37-44, footnotes pp. 109-112. It is a curious fact that the expected Messiah(s) play no part at all in the War Scroll.

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18 conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead and is coming soon, a time table is superfluous, obsolete.

Paul has added the light/darkness contrast to the day/night imagery, in spite of these difficulties, because the former helps him to speak about two kinds of people in the present time. The notion of two spheres of power is basic to his thought here. The present time for Paul is the period between the death and resurrection of Christ (5:10 and 1:10) and the coming of the Day (5:2). Once he has delimited the present in this way, Paul wants to speak of it in terms of two options, two sets of people, two ways of walking. The light/darkness contrast helps him to do this in part simply by offering a second set of terms by which he can make his point emphatically (by virtual repetition) and stylistically by the use of the parallel structure so typical of his writing. The light/darkness images furnish Paul with a second set of terms to complete the balance of these parallels:

day	night
light	darkness
keep awake	sleep
be sober	get drunk

Paul also uses the light/darkness contrast because in its own native soil (a Qumran-like thought) it speaks of two spheres of power. That is, the terms come to mind not only as a way of filling out a set of parallels, but also because in themselves they suggest two spheres.

To the imperative in I Th 5:8, 'let us be sober,' Paul adds and changes Is 59:17. The text comes to mind, I think, because it contains the words 'the helmet of salvation,' and Paul wishes to refer to salvation in the following clause. He speaks of the <u>hope</u> of salvation in part, of

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19 course, because no Christian simply wears the helmet of salvation as God does in Isaiah, but also because the issues under discussion in 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 have to do with a crisis of hope among the Thessalonian Christians.

So it is also with the breastplate of faith and love. Isaiah speaks of the breastplate of righteousness, an issue with which Paul is much involved elsewhere. As this epistle shows, Paul is here most concerned about faith under the impact of persecution and about mutual love in the community. These characteristics of the Christian life, threatened by the problems faced in Thessalonica, become pieces of defensive armor, protection in the present for those who are 'of the day,' destined to a sure, but future, salvation. The quotation is also a kind of imperative, as is shown by the fact that it modifies ὑνήφωμεν. Paul means to say not only that his readers have protection available to them, but also that they must put it on. There is not something else which protects the endangered faith, love, and hope. These are themselves both what is at stake and what protects.[1]

The other text which might have battle overtones, but which does not, I think, is I Th 4:16. The passage in which it is found, 4:13-18, is similar to 5:1-11: the motif of reassurance is prominent, the Day of the Lord is the focus, the context is the crisis of hope in the church.

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[1]It is impossible to know whether Paul's readers recognized the quotation from Isaiah. If they did, the reference offers additional reassurance. In Isaiah, it is God who dons these pieces of protective armor; in I Th, Paul says that God's armor is provided for the Christian. At least in Paul's mind, the change of subject is very important.

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20 Specifically, the three images (cry of command, archangel's call, trumpet of God) function to wake the dead; they are all images of audition.[1] Paul may have used them in connection with his preaching about the Last Day, since he is attempting to reassure his readers by building new teaching on old. If so, he means to say here: "You remember my description of the heralding of the Day. These sounds will wake those who have slept."

The term which most strongly suggests battle is the trumpet. Paul uses it in I Cor 14:8, where it is explicitly associated with war, and in I Cor 15:52, where it is, as in I Th 4:16, the herald of the Day. There are many functions for trumpets in the OT and Jewish sources,[2] among which is a use in battle.[3] The archangel also is sometimes associated with warfare, but again, these motifs are not the only ones, and may not be the dominant ones.[4] The 'cry of command' may be used of military as well as other orders.

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[1]The literary convention which used words for 'sleep' as euphemisms for death serves Paul well. Note that he refers to the dead three times as 'those who are asleep' before the images of audition. It is only after this that he calls them the 'dead in Christ.'

[2]Of the 101 uses of the word in the LXX, only 23 refer to war and of these many are repetitions in the same passages. Only Jeremiah and II Macc in the LXX speak of trumpets only in relation to warfare. Trumpets are frequently used to announce events or to call the people (Ex 19:13; 19:16; I K 13:3; Is 58:1) and in relation to celebration and cult (II K 6:15; II Chr 5:13; many Pss). In the War Scroll the function of trumpets is primarily cultic (see Section 4, Yadin, pp. 266-270; Section 12, pp. 292-300). Yadin (p. 87) believes these passages depend on Num 10:1-10, where the cult is also primary.

[3]For example, Ex 7:14; Joel 2:1 (but see 2:15, where the trumpet calls to fasting); Zeph 1:16; Zech 9:14. In two passages (Amos 2:2; Hosea 5:8) trumpets are associated with destruction which often includes warfare.

[4]The archangel is often called Michael (Jude 9). Michael sometimes leads in battle (Dan 10:13,21; Rev 12:7). Sometimes he does not (B.T. Yoma 77a; Enoch 20:5; Jude 9). Yadin (p. 236) believes Michael to be the Prince

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21 I do not think that these three figures would have suggested warfare to Paul's readers, but rather, a more general description of the instantaneous but announced Day (as in I Cor 15:52). They are similar to the 'sudden destruction' of 5:3, in referring to a cataclysmic event. They do not announce the end of the final eschatological war.

Paul had certainly not applied battle terminology previously to the present. He did not call Christians to battle. He expected the parousia soon (4:17); he and his readers wait for the Son (1:10). The letter repeatedly enjoins them to live blameless and holy lives (3:3; 4:3-7; 5:23). There is no suggestion of warfare in the first three chapters in which Paul deals at length with the problem of affliction and persecution.[1] Even in 5:8, where the battle imagery is explicit, believers are not called to fight, but only to don the protective armor available to them. This armor belongs properly to God; it offers a defense in the present. The armor is faith, love, and hope. These are at stake, endangered in the church. What protects the Christian is precisely what is threatened.

The battle imagery is minimal in this epistle. It may be that it is not of central importance to Paul. Or it may be that I Th records the beginnings of his application of the imagery of the Last Day to the present time.

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of Light(s) in the Qumran literature (see Dan 12:1, where Michael is called 'the great prince'). I do not suggest that Paul necessarily applied to the archangel any or all of the characteristics given to Michael in the literature. The variety of titles and functions is notorious. The material cited only calls to mind that world of ideas in which the leader of angels sometimes does battle.

[1]Again, Qumran is suggestive. In the Manual of Discipline (3:13-25), there is a temporal distinction between present affliction and the final eschatological battle. The 'sons of light' suffer because of the 'sons of darkness' now; they will fight them in the future.

22 Who Is the Enemy?

There are two obvious enemies named in I Th and related to each other. The first are those responsible for the persecution. In I Th 2:13-16, Paul speaks bitterly about his Jewish opponents, but also indicates that the Thessalonians' own countrymen are of the same sort. The enemy is also Satan, the Tempter, who in 3:5 tempts from faith and who, in 2:18, 'hinders' (ἐγκόπτω) Paul. Readers would not have missed the similarity between Satan's activity here and the Jews' in 2:16 where the verb is κωλύω.[1]

Then there are the 'others' (οἱ λοιποι), who are the opposite of the Christians, but cannot be called enemies, I think. These are immoral (4:5); they have no hope (4:13); they sleep and get drunk (5:6,7); they believe they are safe, but destruction overtakes them (5:3). The destruction is the wrath which is coming (1:9; 5:9). The Jews suffer the wrath of God (2:16), so that while the 'others' do not actively threaten the Christians they share the same fate as those who do.

The notion of two spheres is at work here. There is a line which divides Satan, the persecutors, and the 'others' from God,[2] the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Christians. Power is being exercised on both sides of the line. Satan has power to tempt. Both he and the persecutors have power to hinder. Power on the other side is God's (1:5; 2:13;[3] 4:16, and

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[1]The synonymous meaning of the two verbs for Paul is clear from his use of κωλύω in Rom 1:13 and ἐγκόπτω in Rom 15:22.

[2]God is very much the leader, initiator, chief actor of his 'side' in this epistle; Jesus Christ much less so. Cf. 1:4; 1:10; 2:4,12,13; 3:11; 4:8,9,16; 5:9-10,23 for references to God's action. Cf. 3:11-12; 4:15 on Jesus. There is nothing in this epistle like I Cor 15:27-28.

[3]The verb ἐνεργέω should not be translated here as elsewhere in Paul as 'powerfully at work' or something similar.

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especially 5:24). Those in each sphere of power oppose each other, but the language of eschatological battle is not applied to their contact with each other. The resolution of the opposition is reserved for the future wrath, sudden destruction, which will overtake those on the one side.[1] For purposes of this study, the importance of these comments is that Paul does not see himself or the Thessalonian Christians as God's delegated agents for the destruction of the enemy.

Another way to answer the question, "Who is the enemy?" is to look at what is threatened, namely, faith, love, and hope. In the case of the first, faith is threatened clearly by severe persecution. That is, the enemy is someone from the other sphere of power. This is not true of what threatens love and hope. These are endangered by conflict within the community and by doubts about the Day.

Paul draws back from a simple good-guys/bad-guys scheme, such as that found in Qumran. He does not understand the 'others' as the enemy; he does not see himself and the church as soldiers commissioned to wreak

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[1]At two places, present and aorist tenses are used for verbs referring to the future parousia. In 5:2-4, the literary convention of using present tense for future events, especially in prophetic statements (BDF, para 323) serves Paul well. He wants to speak about life in the present under the impact of the coming Day. He emphasizes this impact in part by using the present tense throughout vss. 2-8.

The wrath is future (1:9; 5:9) in this epistle except for the aorist tense in 2:16. In part, the aorist is explained as having a punctilliar force: the wrath is like the sudden destruction of 5:3. It is also, it seems to me, a statement Paul makes from the standpoint of the impending parousia and judgment. While dealing with issues unsettling the church, Paul is careful to define the appropriate way of living for the present moment. In speaking about his enemies, whose destiny is not his responsibility and has already been determined, he talks as if it had already come to pass.

(The tense in T. Levi 6:11 is also aorist. Whether Paul copied this text or the reverse has no bearing on our argument here.)

24 destruction on the enemy; he sees dangers from within the community. At the same time, the resolution of the problems is certain and near. This means that for the present it is enough that Christians are offered protective armor. If they 'wear' their faith, love, and hope, their participation in the coming victory is assured.

Battle Imagery in I Corinthians

I Corinthians 9:7

> Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

The reference to a soldier and his wages in I Cor 9:7 occurs in the context of Paul's claim to the same right as other apostles to receive material support from his apostolic ministry. This argument is followed in 9:15f. by his reasons for refusing such support. The example of the soldier is the first of three in 9:7 (soldier, planter, shepherd) designed to show that it is normal for a worker to reap something of the material results of his work. Two similar examples (plowman, thresher) follow in 9:10 as comment on Deut 25:4, quoted in 9:9.

It may be that these are all instances of general human practice which come to Paul's mind when he asks himself, "Where does one find workers whose right to some of the produce is unquestioned?" Evidence for this possibility is found in the fact that Paul never uses four of these five examples elsewhere. It is probable that the mention of 'planting' began the train of thought which suggested caring for the flock, the OT reference and the two examples which follow it. These four all come from the same area of activity, namely, agriculture.

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There is evidence which suggests, however, that Paul thinks of the soldier because he thinks of himself as a soldier. He is defending his own rights. The soldier is the first instance he cites. The second is one which he has used of himself in I Cor 3:6, 7, 8.[1] It is with the third image that the agricultural motif becomes dominant, and the immediate relevance of the examples more remote.

That Paul thought of himself as a soldier is clear from Phil 2:25 and Phile 2, where he identifies colleagues as 'fellow-soldiers' συστρατιώτης.[2] I think I Cor 9:7 is the first, the earliest evidence we have from Paul of this notion.

I Corinthians 14:8

> And if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound,
> who will get ready for battle?

This verse might be interpreted along lines similar to those above. That is, Paul may have alluded to a trumpet calling troops to war in order to suggest that the church must be edified, built up (rather than divided and confused by an excess of glossalalia) if it is to fulfill its function. That function is then understood in part as fighting.

For two reasons, I think these overtones are absent or very remote from this passage. First, unlike 9:7, the battle image does not occupy a position of emphasis. Second, it follows images of audition,[3] specifically

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[1] In 3:6, Paul plants a field (γεώργιον); in 9:7, a vineyard (ἀμπελῶνα). He does not use either word elsewhere. Compare his extensive use of οἰκοδομή (3:9) and the cognate verb.

[2] Paul speaks of his material support as ὀψώνιον in II Cor 11:8, further evidence that in I Cor 9:7 he thinks of himself as a soldier. I will discuss II Cor 11:8 below.

[3] The trumpet is similar to that in I Th 4:16 in that both are used because Paul wants images of audition. Nevertheless, the association with warfare is present in I Cor 14:8 while it is not in I Th 4:16.

the sounds of two other musical instruments. It is probable that these called to mind the trumpet. The latter is then similar to the flock in 9:7. It is analogous to the preceding images and used for that reason.

However, it is to be noted that the trumpet brings to mind warfare for Paul in this verse. In his other two uses of it, I Th 4:16 and I Cor 15:52, this is not so clear.

I Corinthians 15:24-26, 32, 52, 54-55, 57; 16:9

> But each in his own detachment of soldiers: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the Kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
>
> What do I gain, humanly speaking, if I fought the beasts at Ephesus?
>
> ...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed.
>
> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "Oh death, where is thy victory? Oh death, where is thy sting?"
>
> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> ...for a wide door of effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

For purposes of this study, I Cor 15 is unique. It brings together all of the motifs to be studied in this thesis: Battle imagery occurs in an eschatological context. The temporal categories are much emphasized. Words denoting battle are used with reference to the present time. The notion of two spheres of power locked in combat is prominent. The 'principalities and powers' are mentioned in relation to battle. Moreover, the

27 motif of suffering, dying daily, is associated with fighting. The passage is one of two in the Pauline corpus where the metaphor of warfare is sustained (and not merely suggested).[1] It is the only passage in which Paul employs battle imagery (vss. 24-26), drops it, then takes it up again (vss. 52-55).

Historical context and purposes of I Cor 15. Even for Paul, whose arguments are often complicated, I Cor 15 is confusing and obscure. The literary structure of the chapter is highly complex. In an attempt at coherent presentation, I offer first a reconstruction of the historical background (what led Paul to write I Cor 15), the theological differences which divided him and his readers, and how he tried to settle these issues. Second, the evidence for the construction is discussed in detail.

The question of the resurrection was originally raised when some members of the church died. This was unexpected. The Corinthian Christians asked Paul about these deaths and he answered that those who have died will be raised at the coming of Christ. Some of the Corinthians reject the notion of a resurrection and respond with comments and questions like those in I Cor 15:12 and 35. Paul writes this chapter to deal with those questions.

The Corinthians addressed by Paul believe they have no need of a resurrection because they are in some sense (the most important sense) already raised, already exalted, already beyond death. This belief rests on their Christology. They understand Christ to be the exalted, spiritual Man (Anthropos) and themselves to be essentially one with him, to share his

[1]The other is II Cor 10:3-6.

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exaltation and spiritual character. Two further consequences of this belief are important for the discussion in I Cor 15. The first has to do with the body: at some point in the future, the physical body will be put off as is appropriate for those whose nature is spiritual. Second, there are in the present two kinds of people: the spiritual and the psychical.[1] The Corinthians to whom ch. 15 is directed belong to the first set, and are thus superior to the merely earthly second group.

Paul agrees with the Corinthians that he and they do not face physical, literal death in the future. He is willing to speak of Christ as the exalted Anthropos. He disagrees with them, however, on all the other points mentioned: He does not conclude, as they do, that because they will not die, they are beyond death. Death is not only the final end of life for Paul, but also and more important a present threat even to those who will not die. He does not agree about the way in which Christians are related in the present to the exalted Anthropos Christ. He claims against them that there will always be a body. He wants to substitute for their notion of two kinds of people, which he rejects, a notion that there are two times, an ambiguous present and an exalted future.

The evidence for the background of the discussion about resurrection is as follows:[2] First, some members of the Corinthian church had certainly died (I Cor 11:30; 15:18). Second, perhaps in response to a question from the church, Paul spoke of the resurrection in something like the way he wrote

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[1] I translate ψυχικός with the word 'psychical' because 'physical' (RSV) is misleading. I am not sure English provides us with an adequate word.

[2] I am indebted to Hurd, The Origins of I Corinthians, pp. 229-233, for the reconstruction of the background.

29 in I Th 4:13-18. The similarity between that passage and I Cor 15:52 gives concrete evidence for this beyond the general likelihood of it: in both texts the parousia is sudden, instantaneous, heralded by a trumpet; in both the resurrection of the dead is mentioned before the reference to those who are still alive. Third, Paul is certainly quoting a Corinthian response in 15:12 and probably also in 15:35. Fourth, the literary structure of ch. 15 shows that Paul has organized his comments around the objections of his readers:

Outline of I Cor 15

A. 1-11 Universal apostolic tradition -- basis of the Corinthians' faith, vss. 1-2, 11.

B. 12-34 Defense of belief in the resurrection of the dead.

1. 12-19 Basic point: Christ was raised from the dead; therefore, there is resurrection from the dead. (Or: a series of consequences which follow if there is no resurrection of the dead.)

2. 20-28 The resurrection according to ordered detachments.

a. 20 Christ the first fruits

b. 21-22 Parenthesis -- the two Anthropoi

c. 23-24a First, Christ
Then, at his parousia, those who belong to him
Then, the telos

d. 24b-26 What Christ must do before the telos

e. 27-28 Parenthesis -- the limits of Christ's reign

3. 29-32 Consequences of resurrection of the dead

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a. 29 Baptism on behalf of the dead[1]

b. 30-32 Paul's way of living[2]

4. 33-34 Conclusion -- exhortation

C. 35-50 What kind of body?

1. 35 The question

2. 36-38 The body as the seed sown

3. 38-41 There are different kinds of bodies

4. 42-44 What is sown; what is raised, four sets of opposites

5. 45-49 The two Anthropoi according to the terms of the last contrast, psychical and spiritual

6. 50 Conclusion and transition verse

D. 50-58 Continuation and partial repetition of the resurrection according to orders (vss. 20-28).

1. 50 The contrasts restated

flesh and blood - inheritors of Kingdom

perishable - imperishable.

2. 51-53 What will happen to bodies at the parousia

3. 54-55 Death will be defeated

4. 56-58 A parenthetical remark, thanksgiving and conclusion.

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[1]Logically, this verse belongs to vss. 12-19.

[2]These verses are closely related to vs. 19.

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There are indications throughout the First Epistle to the Corinthians that Paul's readers considered themselves already 'raised,' already exalted.[1] In 15:42-44, one suspects that the Corinthains thought of themselves as already imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. Paul's treatment of the two Anthropoi in vss. 21-22 and 45-49 suggests that the Corinthians interpreted Christ as the inclusive Anthropos, who led the way to exaltation and through whom they were exalted. This indicates that the views of the Corinthians were related to that form of Gnostic thought,[2] which centered around a heavenly figure come into the world of ordinary men, who by his own exaltation (release, escape) made possible redemption for men who became part of him. For the Corinthians, there is one Anthropos, Christ.[3] The step from these notions to a belief that they were in some sense already beyond death is a short one. Moreover, Paul speaks in 15:51 and elsewhere as if he and his readers do not expect to die.

Paul's long and somewhat dubious[4] argument about the body and various kinds of bodies in vss. 35-44 offers evidence both that he and his

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[1]For example, I Cor 1:26-28; 3:1-3; and especially 4:8, 10. The evidence in 6:12-19; 8:1-6 of a libertine ethic, and in ch. 7 of an ascetic ethic both suggest a Corinthian view that they were beyond the need for normal ethical rubrics.

[2]The form of Gnostic thought known to us from Poimandres and the rest of the Hermetica, for example, the dating of which is, to be sure, uncertain. Cf. also, Meyer, P.'Jn 2:10,' JBL 86 (1967), 191-197, especially pp. 196-197.

[3]Vss. 27-28 seem to be an argument against a superexaltation of Christ at the expense of God. The Corinthian Anthropos may have virtually replaced God, from Paul's point of view.

[4]Apart from the questionable applicability to the matter under discussion of vss. 39-41, for example, the image used for death (sowing) is not very convincing from one who does not expect to die writing to those who agree with him on that score.

32 readers disagree about the subject and that for him there will always be a body. That his readers look forward to putting off the body entirely[1] is suggested by Paul's use of the verb 'to put on (ἐνδύω) in vs. 53, and of the expression 'bare kernel' (γυμνὸς κόκκος) in vs. 37. Paul appears to be reversing his readers' position: what is now a bare kernel which for Paul needs to be clothed, is for the Corinthians unnecessary clothing which they expect to put off.[2] At what point did they believe the process would be complete? Not at death, for they did not believe they were going to die. It seems to me that the parousia of Christ may have been for them the moment when the release from the body is complete. Paul's insistence in vs. 53 that "we shall all be changed" opposes a view which regards that final point as of less importance than the shift (from psychical to spiritual) which has already taken place.

Paul's argument in vss. 44-49 suggests the notion of two kinds of people, of which the spiritual is infinitely superior. The terms psychical and spiritual are related first to bodies and then to the two Anthropoi; they are first juxtaposed and then related temporally. Again, Paul

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[1]Some Corinthians may have believed that they had begun this process by the fact that they belonged to the risen, spiritual Christ. In Poimandres, death initiates a process of putting off the things which are obstacles to divine life, The first thing to be put off is the body. In Corinth, becoming identified with the spiritual Christ may have initiated the process.

[2]See II Cor 5:1-4, where the words ἐνδύω and γυμνός appear, and Phil 3:21. The first passage offers evidence that γυμνὸς κόκκος of I Cor 15:37 and the use of ἐνδύω in 15:53 are not casual, replaceable with some other words, but are terms of importance in the discussion between Paul and his readers.

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33 reverses his opponents' argument. The spiritual body is not first (a Gnostic claim[1]), but last; we are not yet like the Man from heaven.[2]

Paul opposes the Corinthian view that they are beyond death by speaking repeatedly of death as a present threat, an inimical and as yet powerful enemy, in spite of the fact that he and the Corinthians will not die. He opposes the Corinthian Anthropos Christology, and the consequent error in understanding how the Christian is related to Christ in the present, by speaking of two Anthropoi. He deals with both of these issues in the context of his attempts to substitute for a notion of two kinds of people his own view of two times, that is, his eschatology.

The comments about the two Anthropoi found in vss. 21-22 are preceded and followed by elements in the eschatological scheme. The second reference to Adam and Christ, in vss. 45-49, precedes Paul's return to the scheme. The references to death as a present threat form the climax of each of the eschatological sections (vss. 26, 54-55); they occur also in relation to the first man (vss. 21-22) and in vs. 31, a verse which will be discussed below.

Two steps are involved in Paul's use of the two Anthropoi. The first is to insist that there are two; the second is to relate them

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[1]See the Meyer article, cited in fn. 2, p. 35.

[2]In relation to the belief in two kinds of people, see also I Cor 3:1-3. Here the lower kind are called σαρκικός.

temporally. Paul does this twice. The first instance is in vss. 21-22. There the first step is to associate one man with death, the other with resurrection of the dead. The second step is to say that in the one man, Adam, all die (or, all are dying).[1] That is, death is not just something which has happened to those who have slept; it is a reality for 'all.' The parallel statement, in the future tense, is that all will be made alive (that is, not only those who have died before the parousia). The distinction between present and future says in part to Paul's readers, "You are not fully alive yet."

The second instance of the same kind of argument is in vss. 45-49, where Paul returns to the theme of the two Anthropoi. One is a 'living psyche' (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν),[2] the other a 'life-giving spirit' (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν). Picking up on the last of the distinctions made in vss. 42-44, he first allows for the difference between the two men, one is ψυχικός, the other πνευματικός.[3] In this statement there are no verbs to give temporal definitions. He then goes on to make these explicit in vs. 49. The future tense of the verb 'to bear' (φορέω), makes the same point as that in vs. 22.[4]

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[1]The present tense may have durative or iterative force, as in vs. 32, "I die daily."

[2]Paul quotes Gen 2:7, which serves him well, since it contains the words ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

[3]And, in vs. 48, the difference between those who belong to the two men.

[4]One expects the present or perfect tense for φορέω in vs. 49a, partly as a parallel to vs. 22a ("in Adam, all die"), partly because throughout vss. 42-49 the descriptions (in dishonor, in weakness, physical) refer to Paul and the Corinthians now. Paul, however, may not want, even in this

35 In both passages, the Corinthian distinction between some who are spiritual and some who are psychical is denied.[1] While this is not as clear in vss. 45-49 as it is in vss. 21-22, it is implied by the first person plural verbs in vs, 49. The verses which follow prominently feature statements about 'all' (πάντες). The same word is used twice in vs. 22. The meaning in both places is 'all of us believers.'[2]

Both passages about the Anthropoi are followed by statements about the future parousia (vss. 23-24 and 51-55). In each of these the emphatic point is that death will be overcome. The temporal structure of the eschatological scheme (what happens when) can be clearly seen only when both passages are taken together:

Vss. 20, 23b	Christ has been raised, the first fruits
24b-26	Christ reigns now, and is destroying his enemies
23c	At the future parousia of Christ, those of Christ will be made alive
52c,d	The dead will be raised (first) We (who are alive) will be changed (second)
26, 54	Death will thus be defeated
24	The parousia with the accompanying defeat of death is the telos, when Christ delivers the kingdom to God.

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discussion, to draw the distinction too sharply. He calls believers 'spiritual' elsewhere (Gal 6:1; Rom 8:9). The turn of the ages has occurred in some sense. Something has happened to the fact that we wore the image of the man of dust.

[1]Paul would not deny the distinction absolutely, but he objects to the Corinthians' understanding that they live fully on the spiritual side now.

[2]Paul is not concerned in this passage with the fate of non-believers. The πάντες is meant to erase the distinction of the Corinthians between first- and second-class citizens in the church.

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36 Paul's argument takes an unexpected turn in vs. 24. In vs. 23, his readers are told that at the end of the present time, at the parousia, those who belong to Christ will be made alive,[1] each according to the τάγμα to which he or she belongs. One expects him to go on to list these τάγματα, not only because the word suggests it, but also because of the words ἔπειτα and εἶτα, in vss. 23-24. In I Cor 15:5-7, the list of witnesses to the resurrection proceeds by the terms: εἶτα ... ἔπειτα ... ἔπειτα ... εἶτα. In I Th 4:16-17, the distinction between the dead and the living is marked off by πρῶτον, ἔπειτα. This latter is what Paul has in mind as he dictates τάγμα, but he does not make that clear in vs. 23.[2]

That this is the case, however, is shown by vss. 51-55. The imagery at the beginning of vs. 52, so like that of I Th 4:16, refers to the parousia. At that event, the dead will be raised and the living changed. At that moment (vs. 54), death is defeated. When this is accomplished, Christ will deliver the Kingdom to God.

As Jeremias has argued,[3] Paul speaks throughout vss. 50-54 of the dead who must be raised and the living who must be changed, in perfectly worked out parallels:

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[1] It is important to say, "will be made alive" and not "will be raised" because Paul wishes to include both those who have died and those who (vs. 51) will be changed without dying.

[2] Τάγμα should not be translated simply 'order,' without any modifying word. While the notion of ordering is part of the meaning of the word, it is groups of people which are ordered, in the general meaning of the word acquired in hellenistic times, troops which are ordered in the older, strictly military meaning of the word from classical times.

[3] Jeremias, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," NTS 2 (55-56), 151-159.

	Dead	Living
Vs. 50	φθορά	σάρξ καὶ αἷμα
52	ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι	ἀλλαγησόμεθα
53	φθαρτὸν-ἀφθαρσίαν	θνητὸν-ἀθανασίαν
54	(repeats vs. 53)	

These are the τάγματα about which Paul began to speak in vs. 23.

Paul does not identify the τάγματα in vss. 23f., but instead speaks of the telos immediately, because he wishes to speak about the present as the time in which death continues to be a threatening reality, even for those who will not die. That is, he wishes to locate the time when death is no longer a reality in the future, at the telos.[1]

Battle imagery and the present in I Corinthians 15. The fact that death is defeated at the parousia, in vss. 51-55, shows that Paul is speaking about the present in vss. 24b-26. The telos does not refer to the rest of mankind (the unbelievers), as some commentators have suggested.[2] It does not represent the end of a period following the parousia, along the lines of the distinction between the Messianic Kingdom

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[1]Paul speaks of 'those who are in Christ' before, or instead of, speaking of the dead and the living, because he wants his argument to apply to the living. He says, in effect, "You who are of Christ are not yet made alive. That will happen to you at his Parousia, to you as well as to those who have slept."

[2]See W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, Ch. 10. 'The Old and the New Hope,' pp. 285-320, for the various interpretations of Paul's Messianic belief, and especially pp. 291-298 for I Cor 15, for a discussion both of the issues and of scholarly opinion.

38 and the Age to Come.[1] Nor does it suggest a final eschatological battle to be fought after the parousia.[2] Christ, according to Paul, reigns now, for a limited period of time, and with a clear function to perform. The activity of his reign is to destroy the enemies. The figure is that of a king defending his territory and his people from foes which threaten. The notion of a Messiah whose coming inaugurates a Messianic Kingdom, distinct from the Age to Come, during which the forces of God fight against His enemies, is here applied by Paul to the present time. (It is a striking fact that of all the many uses in the NT of Ps 110:1, it is only in I Cor 15:25 that the enemies are as yet undefeated.)[3]

The situation has been described by Barrett:[4] "Sin and death are in possession of the field, and if they are to be driven from it, it must be by the arrival of new forces which turn the scale of the battle, that is, by a new event." Barrett errs only, it seems to me, in that it is not so much sin, together with death, which are the enemies, but quite clearly, 'all rule, all authority and power.' These, with death, constitute a sphere of power.

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[1]As one finds it in Baruch, IV Ezra, Rev.

[2]As one finds it in the War Scroll, although, of course, without the parousia of Christ.

[3]The tenses of vss. 24b-26 bear this out, although the syntax is complicated. The present tense of the infinitive βασιλεῖν and of the verb in vs. 26, καταργεῖται, mean that Christ is now reigning, now in the process of destroying the last enemy, death. The aorist, καταργήσῃ, in vs. 24 and the present tense of παραδίδωμι in vs. 24 remind one of the aorist in I Th 2:16 and the present in I Th 5:1-2, respectively. Both of these references in I Th speak about the parousia. Paul is not entirely consistent in his use of tenses with regard to the parousia.

[4]Barrett, Commentary on I Cor, p. 353.

39 The new force which has arrived on the scene is the Risen Christ, the first fruits, who is the life-giver. It is his resurrection and his power to give life which constitute his power to do battle. He reigns over a sphere of power opposed to that dominated by the enemies. These two spheres are locked in combat.

The enemies are powers, not men, not Adam and his followers. Paul is arguing that the two opposing sides are not two kinds of people. He expects his readers to understand his reference to πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν. He does not mention them again. They are, of course, superhuman beings designated in various ways by Paul. In this epistle, the ἐξουσίαι and δύναμεις do not occur elsewhere. The ἀρχή does not either, but the closely related word, ἄρχοντες, appears in 2:6, 8. The ἄρχοντες are of this age and in 2:6 they stand in parallel syntactical structure to 'of this age.' They are being destroyed (καταργουμένων, as in 15:24, 26). They "crucified the Lord of glory." They are therefore enemies whose weapon is death.[1]

The most important enemy in I Cor 15 is death itself.[2] It is like the 'rule, authority and powers,' since the same verb is used to describe its defeat. It is the enemy which exercises inimical influence on men in the midst of life: "in Adam, all die (or, are dying)," "I die daily." It is the enemy to whose defeat Paul returns at the end of the chapter. Compared with the power of death, the 'powers' do not loom large in this

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[1] I will return to the ἄρχοντες in the next chapter of the thesis.

[2] Death is not an enemy in I Th or Gal.

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40 passage. They appear primarily in order to help Paul's readers understand how he views death: Death is like the powers, but more threatening, more important.

That the defeat of the enemies is final at Christ's parousia is clear; it is not so clear in what way Christ is now, in the present, in the process of destroying them. He is risen, exalted, spiritual and life-giving. But how do these characteristics function in the present to wage war? The question is especially important in light of the fact that the Corinthians, if they could be brought to speak about conflict at all, would certainly have said that they, being of Christ, were already the victors over the powers and over death.

While Paul's answer to the question is not so explicit as to eliminate debate, I think there is evidence to show that Christ fights in the present to destroy the enemies by means of the daily death of those who belong to him.

That Christians fight is suggested by:

1) The τάγμα. While it is true that this word was used to designate a group of people generally in Hellenistic times,[1] both the military and the ordering overtones would be clear to Paul's readers.

2) The last trumpet, vs. 52. I Cor 14:8 shows that Paul associates the trumpet with warfare. The last one signals the event which marks the defeat of all the enemies.

3) 15:30-32; 16:9. To be in peril, to fight the beasts at Ephesus,[2] to die daily are all references to the same experiences. In

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[1] Cf. Bauer, ad loc.

[2] θηριομαχέω in vs. 32, is of course a word from the languages of games, and not strictly a military term. It is surely, however, battle terminology.

41 15:30-32, Paul's point is that if this life is all the Christian has, why fight? (Cf. also 15:19) In 16:9, Paul appears to regard the presence of adversaries as a sign that he must stay in Ephesus and work there. Where he fights and dies, there he participates in the destruction of the enemies.

In 1:28, something similar is said. The things that are not (the believers) have been chosen by God to destroy (καταργέω again) the things that are (the noble, the powerful by the world's standards). That is, Christians do what Christ, in 15:24-26, does.

There are numerous echoes in Ch. 15 from 4:8-13. First, 4:8 congains the only other uses of βασιλεῖν apart from ch. 15 in I Cor. In his ironic comments (4:8f.) and in 15:25, Paul draws the relationship between Christ, the leader in battle, and the 'soldiers,' who definitely do not reign. But they participate in the battle, if they understand the relationship properly:

1) Vs. 9, "under sentence of death" is very like 15:32, "I die daily."

2) In 4:10, the apostles are described with words repeated in 15:43, ἀτιμία and ἀσθενεία.

It may even be possible, on the basis of 11:26-30, to view the Lord's Supper, properly celebrated, as a weapon in the war to defeat the enemies. This is suggested by the ways in which death appears in these verses. On the one hand, the proper celebration of the Supper proclaims the Lord's death in this period of time. On the other, the improper use of the Supper may mean that believers have changed sides: they may die. That is, death in Christ's sphere functions as a weapon against death, the

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power inimical to men. Outside that sphere it is the final, worst enemy with all power.

These comments have all been based on passages from I Corinthians. One could cite many from other epistles, but I have not done this, in order to limit the discussion to what Paul's readers might have been expected to understand. I am driven to add II Cor 4:10-12 to the discussion, however, because it is so like I Cor 4:8-13, and because it makes clearer than anything in I Cor the way in which Paul understands death and life to be related to the Christian's witness (battle). Twice in vss. 10 and 11, Paul speaks of the Christian's suffering as carrying (being given up to) death (Jesus', for Jesus' sake), in order to (ἵνα) manifest Jesus' life in the body, in mortal flesh. In I Cor 15, it is Christ, the life-giver, who is destroying the enemy death. In II Cor 4:10-11, the daily death of those who belong to him manifests his life. Vs. 12 tells us that the daily death of the apostles, which is the death of Jesus, manifests life not only in them but also in those to whom they are sent.

Believers do not conquer death. It is conquered for them by God through Christ at his parousia. Believers do, however, participate in the battle which is destroying death in the present by dying daily. They are related to Christ in the present according to his death. Because he has been raised, the daily death is not the final word. The final word is victory. But not yet;[1] in the present, the battle goes on.

Conclusion

Battle imagery comes to Paul's mind, as he dictates I Cor 15, as an element integral to apocalyptic thought. In this and other respects, it is similar to I Th. In both, battle imagery is associated with the Last Day

[1]Despite the present tense of δίδωμι in 15:17. See fn. 3, p. 42.

43 as the time of the resurrection of the dead. In both, the notion of warfare is applied to the present, seen from the perspective of the parousia. In both, the idea of two spheres of power in opposition to each other is prominent and the Christians' affliction is seen as the result of that opposition.

The differences between the two passages are also striking. The picture of the present as the Messianic Age, in which the Messiah fights the final battle against God's enemies, is not explicit in I Th, as it is in I Cor 15. In the former, it is not only the case that Christians do not fight; Christ does not fight either. God is very much the Actor in I Th; in I Cor 15, Christ takes the responsibility given by God for a limited period and a definite purpose.

Battle imagery serves Paul in I Cor by aiding him in the description of the present time as a time of struggle, against readers who believe it is the time of exaltation. (Paul's purpose in I Cor 15 takes him much further along this line than he had occasion to travel in writing to the Thessalonians. They were under no illusions about being already exalted.) The notion of a Messianic Age, distinct from the Age to Come, becomes explicit in order to do this. Death as a present, powerful and inimical reality is central to Paul's concerns for the first time. It is an <u>almost</u> totally negative, destructive reality in I Cor 15. (A striking feature of Paul's discussion of death is that <u>Christ's</u> death is not mentioned, except for the quotation of church tradition in 15:3. Of course, Paul has already dealt with this in 1:18ff. But there is no statement in I Cor like those in Rom 6:3-11, where Christ's death and the believer's death with him are the basis of the argument which follows. In I Cor 15, men are dying 'in Adam,' not 'in Christ.')

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44 The positive function of death is related to battle and suffering and the two spheres of power.

15:30 Why am I in peril every hour?

15:31 .....I die every day.

15:32 .....I fought with beasts at Ephesus

16:8-9 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

Death and battle are both metaphors used by Paul to speak about his suffering as an apostle. I have attempted in the discussion above to show that Paul understands his dying daily to be part of Christ's battle now to destroy the last enemy, death. The Christian's dying daily is then a weapon in the battle against death. It is a weapon in both spheres of power.

One is reminded of I Th again. There, faith, love, and hope are both what is threatened and what offers protection. In I Cor 15, death is both the threatening enemy and the Christian's weapon against it. This ambiguous state of affairs is the consequence of the fact that the believer does not live wholly in the sphere of Christ. In I Th, what threatens love and hope comes from within the community. (As Pogo once remarked, "We have met the enemy, and he is us.") In I Cor 15, those who believe themselves to be beyond death not only still threatened by it, but also run the risk of removing themselves from the sphere of Christ by their refusal to participate by dying daily in the battle he is presently waging.

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Battle Imagery in II Corinthians

6:7; 7:5; 10:3-6; 11:8

Paul's use of battle imagery in II Corinthians is strikingly different from that found in I Th and I Cor. It is stronger, more explicit and more varied. It is much clearer in II Cor that the believer fights than it has been until now. Moreover, it is not the notion of the parousia which brings warfare to Paul's mind in this epistle.

It is not necessary to discuss in detail the baffling problems of unity and integrity in II Cor, both because that has been ably done elsewhere,[1] and because the questions involved are not decisive for this study. In the course of my work, I have found small indications which support the view that II Cor 1-7 were written by Paul substantially as we have them, and prior to chs. 10-13.[2] These elements will be noted. With many critics, I take chs. 10-13 to be part of a letter separate from chs. 1-7. While I will discuss the passages in question with this working hypothesis in mind, the results of the study depend on it at only one crucial point.[3]

More important is the identity of the opponents in chs. 1-7 with those in 10-13. Here I am indebted to studies which support that thesis.[4]

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[1]See Kummel, pp. 211-215, and for a more recent discussion, John Koenig, "The Motif of Transformation in The Pauline Epistles," unpublished dissertation for Union Seminary, 1970, pp. 12-16.

[2]The exception is the passage, II Cor 6:14-7:1, which, with many critics, I take to be a non-Pauline interpolation. I do not make a decision with regard to chs. 8-9, as they do not provide any material for this study.

[3]The point has to do with the discussion of Paul's use of the notions of death, which will be discussed in the section on II Cor 7:5.

[4]I refer most specifically to D. Georgi, Die Gegner des Paulus im 2 Korintherbrief (Newkirchen) 1967; S. Shulz, 'Die Decke des Moses,' ZNW 49 (1958) 1-30; and J. Louis Martyn, 'Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages,'

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46 II Corinthians 6:7

> ...truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left....

Historical context and Paul's purposes. The immediate context of II Cor 6:7, where battle imagery first appears in this epistle, is 6:3-10; the wider context is 2:14-6:13; 7:2-4. In this long passage, Paul defends his apostolate. What are the true credentials of an apostle? What equips him as sufficient for his calling (2:16; 3:5)? How and by whom is he commended (3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4)? There are indications that his opponents have disparaged Paul, not only because he is not vouched for by anyone (3:1), but, more important, because he is unimpressive in appearance, word, and style (3:7-4:6[1], 5:12, with 3:2 and 4:6[2]). Paul insists throughout the passage that the power, glory, sufficiency are God's; that the apostle's weakness and unimpressive appearance function precisely to make this clear. Further, these are realities which can be seen by those who rightly hear the message, but which are not visible to those who reject it (2:16; 4:3-4).

Paul makes very high claims for his apostolic status in 5:14-6:2, a passage in which he relates it to Christology and eschatology. All of the affirmations in these verses are made twice. We may discern the

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in Christian History and Interpretation, Studies presented to John Knox; Eds. W. R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule, R.R. Niebuhr (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 269-288.

[1]C. F. Shulz's article, noted above.

[2]This verse is particularly important as it makes clear where the 'glory' is, namely, in our hearts (cf. 5:12) and in the face of Christ. Cf. Martyn's article for a discussion of the opponents' sophisticated argument about faces.

literary order of Paul's words. He speaks, first, about what God has done in Christ; second, about this action's having brought the turn of the ages; third, about the apostle's commission; and, fourth, about God's message delivered by the apostle:

5:14-15	...one has died for all... that those who live might live...for him	5:21	For our sake, he made him to be sin...that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
5:16-17	...the new has come	6:2	Now is the acceptable time...the day of salvation
5:18-19	(These verses present the same thought. In both, God's action in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself and His action in commissioning the apostles are set out in parallel participial phrases. Of course, Paul does not regard the two actions as of equal importance; the second is absolutely dependent on the first. He has, however, linked the two as closely as possible and said it twice.)		
5:20	...ambassadors, God making his appeal through us. On behalf of Christ,	6:1-2	Working together with him....For he says...
	we beseech you: be reconciled to God.		we entreat you: do not accept the grace of God in vain.
			(We say:) Behold now is...the day of salvation.

Paul specifies the ways in which the apostles commend themselves in the context of this description of his commission. It is no surprise that the paradoxical character of his self-commendation comes to clearer expression here than it did in either I Cor 4:8ff or II Cor 4:8ff. The importance for Paul of the 'dying daily' pattern of life has not diminished. But the way in which he has talked about his commission in 5:17ff suggests that he believes it is time to clarify things a bit. Paul's irony (and generosity)

48 in I Cor 4:8ff may have been used against him by the very impressive opponents. In II Cor 4:8ff, Paul's point was to speak about the apostle's suffering on the pattern of Christ's death. Now, at the conclusion of the passage, he speaks in a somewhat different way.

The long list of terms in vss. 4b-6, introduced by the preposition ἐν, follows on and specifies the phrase 'in every way' (ἐν παντί). Paul may speak of 'great endurance' first, because it is the right response to the suffering inflicted on the apostle; he may have 4:8ff in mind. In any case, what follows is a list undifferentiated by introductory prepositions of two quite distinct sets of terms. The first, in vss. 4b-5, is a list of things which happen to the apostle. With these terms, the ἐν means something like 'under the conditions of.'[1] Clearly these sufferings come to mind because Paul thinks of what he endures. The sufferings mentioned are quite general. Compared to I Cor 4:8ff and II Cor 4:8ff, this list does not at all convey the personal anguish present in the others. Paul is stating what happens to apostles with, I think, some detachment.[2]

The eight things mentioned in vs. 6f, together with the first thing mentioned (ὑπομονῇ), speak of ways in which the apostle commends himself. All but two of the terms are characteristics of the servant of God. The ἐν which introduces them is instrumental. These are not, of

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[1]Cf. Bauer on ἐν, p. 258, I, 4, d. His heading for this section is 'To denote a state of being,' and he cites I Th 2:2, among other texts, ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι. This is obviously very close to the meaning of the terms under discussion.

[2]The sense is, "If you are called to be an apostle, this is what you must expect. This is normal." Harry Truman once said something similar about politics, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

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49 course, Christian virtues unrelated to the matters at hand in the passage.[1] They help Paul draw a sketch of the authentic apostle against counter-charges from the opponents.

The two items which are not characteristics of the servant are the Holy Spirit and, at the end of this list, the power of God. Both, however, belong properly to the list; both are ways by which the apostle is commended: by the working of the Holy Spirit[2] in him and by the availability to him of the power of God.[3] Both underscore the point Paul has been making throughout the passage, that the apostle is and has nothing to commend himself except what God has given him.

The reference to weapons in vs. 7 occurs in the first of three clauses introduced by διά. The second and third, "in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute," are obviously closely related to each other and to the first list of things which keep happening to the apostle. The διά in this case means, as does the ἐν in vs. 5, 'under the conditions of' or something similar.[4] Here for the first time in the Corinthian correspondence Paul speaks of honor, as well as dishonor, good repute, as

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[1]On 'purity,' see 2:17; 4:2; 7:2. On 'knowledge,' see again 4:6; 5:12, and 11:6. On 'love,' see 11:11. On 'truthful speech,' see 11:6; 10:10.

[2]Some critics have suggested that the phrase should not be translated 'Holy Spirit,' because of the context. Plummer suggests 'in a spirit which is holy.' Pauline usage does not encourage this sort of attempt. In 13 of the 102 uses of πνεῦμα in Paul, the word is modified by ἅγιος. In each case, the Holy Spirit obviously is meant. The references are: Rom 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15;13; 15:16, 19; I Cor 6:19; 12:3; II Cor 6:6; 13:14; I Th 1:5, 6; 4:8. Even in Rom 1:4, where the phrase is κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, it is the Holy Spirit which is meant.

[3]The ἐν which introduces these two phrases may have locative force as well as instrumental, referring to a sphere of power.

[4]Cf. Bauer on διά, p. 179, III c, 'attendant circumstance.'

well as ill. He is saying, "We are not always despised." These expressions prepare the way for those which follow; the latter are also ordered in sets of two, but they are paradoxical contrasts, not just opposite conditions of life and work.

In vss. 8b-10, there are seven clauses introduced by the adverb ὡς. These statements are more like what we read in II Cor 4:8ff. They have a familiar ring. Yet they are different from what Paul has previously said about his suffering in at least two respects. First, while Paul would certainly describe himself as dying, sorrowful and poor, he would not accept 'imposter'[1] nor, perhaps 'unknown.' Second, the contrasts emphasize the positive side of each experience.[2] In the other passages where this sort of thing occurs (I Cor 4:8ff; II Cor 4:8ff; 11:23ff), the apostle's weakness is contrasted with God's power. That is exactly why the apostle is weak. Here alone in the Corinthian correspondence, the life and wealth of the apostle are claimed by Paul. This is certainly due to the fact that the other kind of contrast has been and, Paul fears, will be used by the opponents against him. In this connection, it is to be noted that the last two contrasts are the same. Paul repeats for emphasis, but also says, "It is not only that the poor apostle makes others rich; he himself possesses all things."[3]

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[1]Paul was probably accused of being an imposter by the opponents, as Martyn has suggested, p. 273. See 4:2; 7:2; 12:16-17.

[2]Cf. II Cor 4:8ff, where the contrasts are between severe suffering and destruction.

[3]Also repeated are the references to death: 'dying, and behold (emphatic), we live; as punished and yet not killed...." These will be discussed in the next section.

51 There are several important points to be noted with regard to the 'weapons of righteousness,' in 6:7. First, the modifying phrase, 'for the right hand and for the left,' gives a metaphor meaning offensive and defensive weapons.[1] This is the first time in the Pauline corpus where the notion of offensive war has occurred. Second, we noted in connection with I Th 5:8, that Is 59:17, quoted by Paul, speaks of the 'breastplate of righteousness.' It is possible that this OT text is in Paul's mind as he dictates II Cor. If this is the case, the offensive warfare notion is intensified as 'breastplate' becomes 'weapons.' Third, the shift in introductory prepositions from ἐν to διά occurs in this passage with reference to weapons.[2] It is immediately preceded by the phrase, 'by the power of God' (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ). It may be that it was the mention of the power of God which brought the idea of weapons to mind.[3] That is, the apostle who commends himself (not by anything he can claim as his own, but) by the power of God made available to him, manifests that power of God through righteousness. Fourth, we know from Rom 6:13 that righteousness is a weapon for Paul.[4] Fifth, the battle imagery occurs between the list of characteristics of the apostle and the references to 'honor and dishonor, ill repute and good repute.' That is,

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[1]Plutarch, Mor. 201d, cited by Bauer on ἀριστερός, p. 106.

[2]Plummer believes the change to be stylistic, the ἐν having become monotonous. But it became monotonous long before Paul changed to διά.

[3]That this is the case is suggested by 10:4, which will be discussed in detail below.

[4]Paul's only other use of ὅπλα, in Rom 13:12, will be discussed in a later section.

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52 the military metaphor is not very closely associated with the vocabulary of suffering in this passage. It may be that the characteristics (purity, knowledge, kindness, etc.) are the weapons of righteousness. In any case, the notion that the Christian fights with Christ by dying daily, found in I Cor 15, is not as clear in II Cor 6:3-10.

How does battle imagery serve Paul's purposes in this passage? At the end of a long section in which he has carefully worked out the apostle's status and vocation in relation to God's action in Christ, the juncture of the old and new age, Paul gives the apostle's credentials. Among other things at his disposal are the powerful weapons for offensive and defensive fighting, available because he has become the righteousness of God (II Cor 5:21). He does not suffer passively; he is not only the victim of affliction. He fights. The pattern of life, despised by his opponents and scorned as powerless, is not to be underestimated, according to Paul. The power is God's, the righteousness is God's, the weapons are those furnished by Him. The 'new-age' power is sufficient for one who knows he stands where the two ages meet. When that power looks insufficient, Paul says by implication, it is because the one who sees does not stand in the right place.

II Corinthians 7:5

> For even when we came into Macedonia,
> our bodies had no rest but we were
> afflicted at every turn -- fighting
> without and fear within.

In this verse, battle imagery is again associated with suffering. The phrase, 'battles without and fears within,' modifies and specifies the

53 phrase, 'but in everything suffering affliction.'[1] Pauline usage of the words in the first phrase is not very helpful in determining his precise meaning.[2] In order to do so, the context is examined in three steps.

First, II Cor 2:13 and 7:5 must be taken together, as critics have long recognized. In both, Paul speaks of being able to find no rest (οὐκ ἔσχηκα ἄνεσιν). In 2:13, the subject of this phrase is his spirit; in 7:5 it is his (and his companions') flesh. As vs. 2:13 states explicitly, and as 7:6 makes clear, the unrest in both Troas (2:13) and Macedonia (7:5) was due to Titus' absence -- that is, to Paul's ignorance of how things were going in Corinth, after his 'painful visit' (2:1). In vss. 7:6-16, Paul speaks of the comfort he received on hearing Titus' report and of his rejoicing at the Corinthians' response to Titus.

A comparison of 2:13 and 7:5 suggests two points:

a) there is a rough sort of correspondence between pairs of terms:

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[1] I have altered the translation to follow Paul in a more literal way.

[2] Paul does not employ μάχη elsewhere, although he does use cognates: θηριομαχέω in I Cor 15:32, mentioned in the discussion of battle imagery in I Cor. Μάχαιρα appears in Rom 8:35, where it stands at the end of a list of afflictions, and in 13:4, where it represents something quite different.

Paul's use of φόβος and cognates reflects the range of meanings possible for the terms. To look only at II Cor 7, vss. 11 and 15 reveal a quite different and very positive use of 'fear.'

Paul does not use the adverbs ἔξωθεν and ἔσωθεν elsewhere (unless one accepts the reading of the latter for ἔσω in I Cor 5:12, by p46). The cognates ἔξω and ἔσω are found together in I Cor 5:12 (and for that reason P46 is probably not original), and in II Cor 4:16. Ἔσω occurs in Rom 7:22. None of these instances appears to involve the contrast that Paul expresses in 7:5.

54

spirit - within

flesh - without.[1]

b) Paul's 'fears' had to do with what was happening in Corinth. Titus' report reassured him on that score. The 'battles' Paul faces in Macedonia do not refer to the Corinthian situation.

Second, 7:5 must be examined in the context of II Cor 1:3-2:13; 7:5-16.[2] The dominant theme of these verses is affliction (θλῖψις) and comfort (παράκλησις); pain, grief (λύπη) and rejoicing (χαρά).[3]

The passage reflects the distinction ('battles' and 'fears') summed up in 7:5.[4] Paul's fears about the situation in Corinth are discussed in 2:1-13; the external pressures he calls μάχη are described in 1:8-10. In this connection we note two points:

a) The severe danger to Paul and his companions in Asia brought them to the brink of death, or so they thought. Paul mentions

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[1]This correspondence helps to interpret Paul's meaning here, but is not characteristic of his anthropology. A warning perhaps! It is, of course, typical of Paul to use parallel contrasts.

[2]Many critics believe that these passages belong to one letter, 2:14-6:13; 7:2-4 to another. While I believe that chs. 1-7 come from Paul's hand substantially as we have them, I treat the two sections separately. They are obviously distinct in overall theme. For other examples of similar digressions in Paul, see I Cor 8-10, in which ch. 9 is a digression, and II Cor 11, in which vss. 2-15 form a digression.

[3]These words and their verbal cognates are repeatedly used in the passage under discussion, very little used in 2:14-6-13; 7:2-4.

[4]Cf. II Cor 11 for a similar distinction. Vss. 23b-27 speak of afflictions imposed on Paul, vs. 28, of his anxiety about the churches.

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55 no defense at their disposal, no means by which to protect themselves. Their escape was effected by God (1:9-10). The experience is used by Paul to appeal to a total reliance on God. In this, Paul's point, repeatedly stated in the Corinthian correspondence, is especially reminiscent of II Cor 4:7f.

b) The description of the danger recalls I Cor 15:32 and 16:9. The evidence is not weighty enough to support the conjecture which follows without leaving some doubts and questions. Nevertheless, it is tempting to interpret I Cor 15:32; 16:9; 1:8-10; 2:12 and 7:5 in this way:

Paul had encountered severe opposition in Ephesus, so that he spoke of it as 'fighting the beasts' (I Cor 15:32, θηριομαχέω in the aorist tense). When he wrote I Cor, he believed that he should stay in Ephesus because the opportunity for work was so promising. Part of its promise, a sign of its promise, was the presence of adversaries (16:9). That is, the presence of adversaries is positively interpreted by Paul. Following the writing of I Cor, Paul and his companions encountered greater opposition than before in Ephesus (and the surrounding area perhaps, cf. 'Asia,' II Cor 1:8). The persecution was so severe that they believed themselves in danger of death. The work in Troas and Macedonia was the same; that is, the opposition was perhaps not so severe, but it was present. In 2:12, Paul uses the same expression as in I Cor 16:9 to speak of opportunity for work, namely, an open door.[1] In 7:5, we learn that the

[1]There is no reference to 'adversaries' in this verse.

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56 situation in Macedonia was similar to that in Troas, and is described in part as battle.

Third, II Cor 2:14-6:13; 7:2-4 must be considered. In relation to the question whether this passage belonged originally in its present literary setting, the many facets of the discussion are not summarized here. Apart from the lack of any manuscript evidence for interpolation (and consequently a presumption of integrity), the following points seem to me to speak in favor of integrity:

1) In 6:10, two verbs much used in 1:3-2:13; 7:5-16 are found: λυπέω and χαίρω. They suggest that Paul has in mind the discussion which precedes and follows the passage.

2) In 7:5, the phrase ἐν παντί may recall 6:4; especially since the latter verse introduces a list of afflictions.

3) The reference both to comfort and affliction in 7:4 appears to me to lead directly back to Paul's previous discussion, interrupted (by him) at 2:14.[1]

The chief problem with regard to integrity appears to me to be the link between vss. 2:13 and 14. Vss. 14 to 16 are a unit, sharing the imagery of perfume. They introduce the long discussion on sufficiency and commendation which concludes with Paul's direct appeal to the Corinthians in 6:11-13; 7:2-4. Why would Paul have placed this passage here? The answer may be found in the words 'always' (πάντοτε) and 'everywhere' (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) in 2:14. Paul has just recorded the fact that he

[1]This could be argued the other way. A scribe, noting the common words of both passages, might have made the interpolation because of them.

57 turned his back on an opportunity for work in Troas because of his acute anxiety about the Corinthian crisis. He went to Macedonia to work because he hoped to meet Titus there. Verse 14 is an expression of gratitude to God who makes use of the failures of his apostle (Paul could not work in Troas) to spread the aroma elsewhere (namely, Macedonia). The meaning is similar to II Cor 4:7; 12:9-10 and elsewhere in Paul: he is weak, fearful; God's power moves on to accomplish His purposes. From this point, Paul moves naturally into the argument about sufficiency.

In this connection, Paul's use of θριαμβεύω in 2:14 may be explained. As critics have long recognized, the word clearly means 'to lead (conquered captives) in triumphal procession.' Efforts to interpret the word more broadly are not supported by usage in ancient sources.[1] The meaning might be that God leads Paul and his companions as captives in triumphal procession, recalling similar imagery in I Cor 4:9, but this is unlikely. The more probable meaning is that God triumphs over Paul's inability to work in Troas (due to his anxiety about the Corinthian church); His purposes are served by Paul's work in Macedonia. The point then is that God triumphs over Paul's failure, not that he treats Paul as a defeated captive, or that Paul here sees himself as part of God's military high command. In any case, it is not a happy metaphor, which may be the reason Paul switches to perfume immediately.

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[1] See for example the information offered in Plummer and the options listed by Bauer. Plummer and others have noted that Greek verbs ending in εύω often have causative force, but no such use of the verb in question is found in the ancient sources. Liddell/Scott lists only II Cor 2:14 with the meaning, 'lead (an army) in triumph.' The verb means either 'to triumph' or 'to lead captives in triumph,' as in Col 2:15.

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58 The integrity of II Cor 1-7 has importance for this discussion because of the various references to death in these chapters. That battle imagery and death are related in these passages is clear from Paul's use of (LXX) Ps 117 in 6:9 and from his strange comment in 7:3, '...to die together and to live together." In order to see what this relationship is, we will look at the many references to death in chs. 1-7. They are found in 1:8-10; 2:16; 3:6, 7; 4:10-12; 5:14-15; 6:9; 7:4, 10. Death is understood in different ways in these texts. They may be grouped as follows:

2:16 and 7:10 - In the first of these texts, death stands in contrast to life, in the second, in contrast to 'repentance unto salvation.[1] The notion of two spheres stands behind these statements. The same experience (fragrance, grief) affects one differently, depending on which sphere one is in. In each case, the negative sphere is characterized by death.

3:6 and 7 - The two spheres are also reflected in these verses. Again, the negative one is the dispensation of death.[2]

1:8-10 - In these verses death is unqualifiedly negative, but it does not denote a sphere. In addition, it is the occasion for the highly positive reliance on God.

4:10-12 and 6:9 - In these verses the ambiguity of life and death, for which Paul is well known, comes to expression.

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[1]Vs. 7:10 recalls Rom 6:23, where the military word ὀψώνιον appears. The text will be discussed in the next section.

[2]Vs. 3:6, "the Spirit gives life," recalls I Cor 15:21-22 and 45.

59 5:14-15 - Paul here gives the Christological basis for the ambiguous relation of life and death.

7:3 - 'To die together and to live together' can only refer to the kind of life and death discussed in 4:10-12 and 6-9. It may in part be intended to go beyond 4:12. I suggested in the previous section that 6:10c may be a correction of I Cor 4:8f. Something of the same may be meant here. Paul's apostolic stance throughout in relation to the Corinthians has been one of serving their best interests. He has repeatedly tried to use his own conduct as an example for them to follow. In 4:12, he says, in effect, 'The life of Jesus which is manifested by our continually being given up to death; that is your life. You have it because we are always being given up to death.' In 7:3, he says, I think, 'we all die on behalf of each other and by that give life to each other' (in Christ, of course).[1]

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[1] In this connection, it is interesting that 5:1-10 contains no reference to death. I am not sure Paul refers to physical death in these vss. It seems rather, to me, that what he says here is in line with I Cor 15, although I have not worked completely through the problems. I suggest that an interpretation of this passage might be built from the following similarities with I Cor 15.

a. The 'earthly tent' in 5:1 is like the 'bare kernel' in I Cor 15:37. It is the present body which must be sown in order to be made alive.

b. The 'building from God' corresponds to the body after it has been changed, I Cor 15:52.

c. 'We groan' (5:2), 'we sigh with anxiety' (5:4) correspond to 'dying daily' (I Cor 15:31) and to much of the content of II Cor 1-7.

d. The 'mortal' which is to be swallowed up in 'life' (5:4) corresponds to the mortal which must put on immortality (I Cor 15:53,54). In this connection Paul uses the same verb, καταπίνω, in 5:4 and I Cor 15:54. The meaning is clearly the same. For death

With these observations, we can now attempt a summary of the relationship among affliction, battle and death, as Paul expresses it in II Cor 1-7. Death in these chapters, as in I Cor 15, is both the power of a sphere inimical to men and a pattern for the Christian's life. It is a deadly and terrible threat, a real and dangerous power. It is the danger and threat which stands behind and is involved in the persecution and affliction which are the conditions of life for the believer. It is at the same time a pattern for living, a witness. It manifests Jesus' life. In the midst of dying, the believer lives. Christians die and live for and on behalf of one another.

The basis of this pattern is, of course, Christ's death 'for us.' In him, 'all have died,' past event, punctiliar. Paul has not said this before.[1] In this passage, 5:14-15, the purpose is "that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him...." To this must be added (7:3), "...to die and live for each other."

'Battles' is the name given by Paul to the afflictions imposed from outside on the servant. The threat and enemy in these battles is death. Against this threat the believer's only weapon is reliance on God. The weapons of righteousness (6:7) for offense and defense function because

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to be swallowed in victory is for the mortal to be swallowed in life. (Paul's only other use of this verb is in II Cor 2:7.) I grant that the antithetical parallelism between being 'in the body' and 'with the Lord' posed a problem. But Paul nowhere speaks clearly about putting off the body. On the contrary, he speaks in 5:4 of being 'further clothed.'

[1]The nearest he comes to a statement like this is in Gal 2:19. But for Paul to say that he has died to the Law is not at all the same as saying that all have died.

61 the servant is one who, though dying, is not killed, but lives (6:9). But these weapons are not something in addition to reliance on God, since the righteousness is God's.

Moreover, the continual dying of the believer is not only a condition imposed on him by pressure from the alien sphere. It is also, now that he has died in Christ, a weapon against the sphere of death. Now that he lives in the sphere of the power of God, the believer's death manifests the life of Jesus.

II Corinthians 10:3-6; 11:8

> For though we live in the flesh we do not fight the war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but are the power of God to destroy strongholds. We destroy sophistries and everything exalted, lifted up against the knowledge of God. We take captive every thought to obedience to Christ. We are ready to condemn every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.
>
> I plundered other churches, receiving soldier's pay from them for my service to you.
>
> (My translation)

Historical context and Paul's purposes. The central issue of II Cor 10-13 is Paul's apostolic status and credentials, as it is in II Cor 2:14-7:4. The conflict is greater in the later chapters; Paul speaks here as though his back is against the wall. All of the discernible charges made against Paul and reflected in this passage can be understood as related to his lack of self-evident spiritual splendor, the mark of his opponents:

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10:1, 10	He is humble and weak with them (bold and threatening in his letters).
10:2	He walks according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα).
10:7	He is not 'of Christ' (Χριστοῦ), 11:23; 13:3.
10:10; 11:6	He is unimpressive in speech.
10:12; 11:5; 12:11	He is unable to commend himself.
11:6	He lacks knowledge.
11:7-11	He did not ask financial support from the Corinthians.
12:1-7	He has no ecstatic experiences, divine revelations to report.[1]

A great many details in chs. 10-13 are clarified if these chapters are understood to have been written after chs. 1-9. First, with regard to the financial issues, Paul may be referring to his opponents when he speaks in 2:17 of 'peddlers of God's word' (καπηλεύοντες).[2] He knows that they are asking money from the Corinthians. He does not here defend his own refusal to do so (having done this in I Cor 9). He may not believe that his policy in this regard is being used to undermine his apostolic status. He certainly knows better when he writes 11:7-11. It is the same with the Jerusalem collection. While there are indications in 4:2 and 7:2 that he knows he is accused of some kind of underhandedness, there is nothing in chs. 8 and 9 to suggest that he is being accused in relation to the collection. On the contrary, he is very careful to function in a

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[1]It is curious that Paul does not here appeal to his conversion (call), recorded as an ἀποκάλυψις in Gal 1:12.

[2]Cf. Bauer on καπηλεύω, p. 404. He suggests the translation, 'huckster.'

63 responsible way on this matter (8:20-21). In 12:16-18, it is clear that he has heard some specific accusation against himself and perhaps Titus.

Second, the phrase κατα πρόσωπον in 10:1, 7 is explained, if ch. 10 was written after chs. 1-9. In 10:1, the phrase is not necessary to the sense of the statement; it has the same meaning as ἐν ὑμῖν ('face to face' and 'among you'). The statement in 10:7 presumably means something like, "Look at the obvious." But what follows is not at all obvious; it is precisely what is at issue: is Paul or is he not of Christ? Paul is, of course, saying that a positive answer ought to be obvious to the Corinthian Christians, but it is an odd way to argue. What follows in vss. 8-11 reinforces this. Paul apologizes for having frightened his readers in his letters and defends himself against the opponents' accusation.

If, in back of these statements, stands the debate between Paul and his opponents about the evidence of splendid faces,[1] these comments in 10:1 and 7 are understandable as irony. Paul says in effect, "Since you are so impressed with faces (10:1), wait till you see mine next time," and (10:7) "why can't you see the obvious?"

A third detail has to do with Paul's use of two words meaning 'boldness' or 'confidence' (θαρρέω, 10:1, 2, and πεποίθησις, 10:2, πείθω, 10:7). While the latter words are used elswhere by Paul,[2] the former is used only in II Cor 5:6, 8; 7:16. In all cases, these words

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[1]Cf. p. 50, fn. 3, in section on II Cor 6:7 above.

[2]The verb is used 14 times in the Paulines; in II Cor: 1:9; 2:3; 10:7. The substantive is used five times: in II Cor 1:15; 3:4; 8:22; 10:2.

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64 denote Paul's confidence either in God or in the Corinthians.[1] None is used again in chs. 10-13. In 10:10, Paul restates the charge against him, using his own words (ἰσχυρός, ἀσθενής). It may be that the opponents turned his use of ἀφρέω and πείθω in II Cor 1-9 against Paul, saying something like: "See how bold and confident he is when he writes to you; he is not like that when he is here."

Fourth, there are several points where Paul appears to move on, in chs. 10-13, in a direction he began in chs. 1-9:

a) The most obvious example is the issue of self-commendation.[2] Paul denounces it and uses it only with great reluctance in 10:13; he is willing in 6:4 to use the words, which he interprets in his own way, of course. Specifically, 12:11 ("...I ought to have been commended by you") seems to follow 3:1-2 ("Or do we need...letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation....").

b) In 6:4, Paul speaks of himself and his colleagues as 'servants' (διάκονοι); in 10-13, the term ἀπόστολος has become the fighting word (11:5; 12:11,12). To speak of himself as a servant in 6:4 is appropriate to the message of the whole passage: the power is God's. This becoming humility may have been turned against him, so that he now feels it necessary to speak of ἀπόστολος.

c) Paul's claim to knowledge (6:6) and to truthful speech (6:7) may have been challenged (11:5).

d) Paul speaks of the Spirit in 3:7-18 and of Jesus (without any title) in 4:10-11. In each case, it may be that he is taking his opponents'

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[1]The exception is II Cor 8:22, which speaks of the 'brother's' confidence in the Corinthians.

[2]This and point b) are discussed by Koenig, p. 14.

65 ideas as a starting point to argue against them.[1] In 11:4, we read that it is a different Jesus and a different spirit.

While it is true that the dominant issue in II Cor 10-13 is Paul's apostolic status and style, it is not true[2] that there are no (other) serious theological issues at stake in these chapters. Paul takes the chief point of conflict with his opponents as the occasion to speak about authentic Christian life at the turn of the ages.[3] He has repeatedly tried to make himself clear on this subject throughout the Corinthian correspondence -- apparently without success.[4] He tries again in this passage, principally in two ways. First, he deals with his own understanding of how the apostle should be judged, measured (10:12-18). This is an argument Paul has not clearly articulated until this time. Second, he restates the

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[1]In the case of 4:10-11, if the opponents see Jesus as a divine man, then Paul's speaking about his death and life is an example of his beginning with a term or notion common to him and his readers, as a point of departure for a quite different kind of argument.

[2]As claimed by Kasemann, "Die Legitimatat des Apostels. Eine Untersuchung zu II Kor 10-13," ZNW XLI (1942), 33-71.

[3]This is typical of Paul. In I Cor 15, a quarrel about the belief in the resurrection of the dead is the occasion for speaking about life at the turn of the ages as not yet glorified, exalted. In Gal 3:6-4:11, the key word, 'justification,' almost certainly used by Paul's opponents, becomes the rubric under which life at the turn of the ages is described as a new beginning. See also fn. 1 above.

[4]One can see why the Corinthians resisted Paul. Given the turn of the ages, the ecstatic experiences of Christians in Corinth, the arrival of very impressive 'apostles,' together with the exhilaration and sense of release which must have characterized some of the believers, it is understandable that they did not want to hear about dying daily and a <u>future</u> parousia. They must have believed they had very good evidence that the power of God was at work among them as <u>they</u> thought, not as Paul claimed.

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66 power-weakness argument, speaking in a somewhat different way from his previous efforts.[1] Both of these discussions are related to his use of battle imagery in 10:3 and 11:8.

Paul's measure. The issue in 10:12-18 is: who is acceptable (δόκιμος), 10:18? The answer is: not the one who commends himself, but the one who is commended by God, 10:12, 18. But whom does the Lord commend? This is a real issue, with real evidence to support the opponents' claims. Why should not one see the opponents as commended by God (and their so-called self-commendation as justified and true)? Are impressive speech and knowledge, ecstatic experiences, shining faces, even letters of recommendation not evidence of God's approval? Why should signs of exaltation and glory in people now be rejected? Granted that Paul's position on this matter can be defended as following the pattern of the cross, why is this not now behind Christians, over and done with for those who are 'of Christ'? Why are not signs of exaltation marks of the turn of the ages?

One can imagine the opponents putting the question to Paul: How does one know that God approves or disapproves? What is the test? If you insist that God's power and glory are made manifest by the apostle's weakness, how does this happen? How and in what sense does dying manifest life?

Paul's answer to these questions is that the power of God is made manifest in the creation and continuing faithfulness of the church. "... but according to the measure of the field of work God gave to us as a measure, we came all the way to you. For we are not overextending ourselves,

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[1] But along lines already begun in II Cor 6:4-10.

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as if we had not reached you; for we came all the way to you with the gospel of Christ" (10:13b-14).[1] The coming into existence of the church is the powerful manifestation of God, for Paul. There have been indications of this frequently before, in the Corinthian epistles and others, but Paul nowhere speaks of it so clearly as he does here. In I Th 1:4-7, Gal 3:1-5; I Cor 1:26-29; 2:1-5, there are descriptions of the reversal of life which brought people into the church by the power of God (or the Holy Spirit). These passages speak of affliction (I Th 1:6; Gal 3:4), the humble origins of the believers (I Cor 1:26-29) and the humble aspect of the apostle (I Cor 2:1-5). In Gal 3:5; II Cor 12:12, and Rom 15:19 there are indications that extraordinary events accompanied the origin and early life of the churches. We know from I Cor 12-14 of the glossalalia and other spectacular spiritual gifts, which Paul did not try to eliminate but only to control. These elements suggest that when Paul spoke of the power of God, he did not refer exclusively to the invisible transformation of Christians but to signs everyone saw and experienced.[2] But these signs were not, for him, marks of exaltation either of believer or apostle. It

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[1] I have translated as literally as possible. The RSV errs in saying, "we were the first to come...." The translation does not change Paul's meaning but it underscores Paul's implied criticism of others who work in his field. That point is not raised by Paul until after he has spoken about preaching the gospel and founding the church.

[2] Of course, Paul speaks everywhere of the believer's personal change -- liberation from idols, reversal of moral life. These are issues also in Corinth.

68 was Paul's experience that when these appear, they bring divisiveness and lovelessness into the community.[1]

From II Cor 10:15-16, it is clear that mutual love and loyalty in the community, and between community and apostle, has importance beyond what we normally read in Paul. That is, it is the essential prerequisite for further missionary work by Paul. These clauses are complicated, and as often with Paul, he is trying to say more than one thing at a time. However, one can distinguish the affirmations as follows:

a) Paul hopes the work in Corinth (and the surrounding region?) will greatly increase as their faith increases.[2]

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[1]This is most evident in I Cor 1:11f; 3:3-4 and elsewhere in this epistle. The same issues may stand behind I Th 4:9-12; 5:12-20; Gal 5:16-6:5.

[2]10:15b, translated literally, reads: "...but having hope to increase to overflowing according to our field of work, as your faith increases (or: with the increase of your faith)." In what way are Paul and his colleagues hoping to 'increase'? Surely, in terms of their missionary work. I take the ἐν ὑμῖν ('among you') to mean not that the Corinthian believers will become better believers (although Paul certainly hoped for that), but to mean that he and they will extend the ministry in Corinth and Achaia to others who have not yet been reached.

I take κανών to mean throughout (vss. 13, 15, 16) 'field of work,' 'sphere of responsibility,' or something of the sort for two reasons. First, the spatial notion is clear in its use in vs. 16, where it occurs in a phrase similar to ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κάποις in vs. 15. Second, the other possible meaning of κανών, as rule or standard (as in Gal 6:16) is the meaning of μέτρον in this passage (the word or a cognate used in vs. 13 three times, vs. 15 once). I think Paul is again turning his opponents' word against them. They have asked about Paul's rule or standard for judging himself. He replies, but uses their word to speak of area of responsibility, which is an issue between them.

The genitive absolute, αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, makes explicit the Corinthians' part in Paul's evangelism: as their faith grows, so does his work.

69 b) Paul also hopes to take the gospel beyond Corinth,[1]

and

c) he fully intends to go to virgin territory.[2]

Of course, Paul is greatly concerned by the deep chasm which now separates him and the Corinthian church. (I think his statement in 12:11 is the most poignant in the corpus: "...I ought to have been commended by you"). He certainly believes that the Corinthians are in danger of proving

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[1]The RSV probably goes too far in beginning vs. 16 with the words 'so that.' It is not clear in the Greek that Paul's mission beyond Corinth is also dependent on the Corinthians' increased faith. It is odd, however, that Paul has no conjunction between the clause with which vs. 15 ends and the following one. ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες in vs. 15 is modified by three infinitives, each of which is completed by a prepositional phrase introduced by εἰς:

μεγαλυνθῆναι εἰς περισσείαν
εὐαγγελίσασθαι εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα
οὐκ καυχήσασθαι εἰς ἕτοιμα.

The lack of connectives may indicate that the first and second are closely (and positively) related, the second and third closely (and negatively) related. (Paul very rarely lacks connecting words.) If this is the case, the mission beyond Corinth is also linked to the faith of the Corinthians.

[2]The RSV translation of vs. 16b is not clear. Paul hopes (he is not at all uncertain on this point) not to boast in things already accomplished (Bauer's suggested translation) in someone else's sphere of responsibility.

This statement is obviously almost a repetition of vs. 15a. Paul is much exercised by the matter. It is not entirely clear what he is against. It is not the coming of other apostles to his area. He has urged Apollos to go to Corinth (I Cor 16:12); he intends himself to visit someone else's area, namely, the Roman church (Rom 15:23-24). Of course, as Rom 15:20-22 make clear, it is Paul's policy not to work where others have preceded him, but it is not clear that he insists that all apostles function in this way. His objection to the opponents in Corinth is not so much that they are there but that they are falsifying the Gospel. One is led to wonder whether his concern in II Cor 10:15a and 16b has to do with a violation of the agreement made in Jerusalem and reported by him in Gal 2:1-10.

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70 unacceptable.[1] But here he speaks of mutuality as the precondition of his missionary work. There have been one or two hints of the same thought before this. One is in I Th 3:8, 'for now we live, if you stand fast...." This is a remarkable statement. It certainly goes beyond a statement of concern; it speaks of Paul's dependence for life on the faithfulness of the Thessalonian church. Another indication is found in the passages which treat the Jerusalem collection.[2] The money is a sign of the mutual responsibility of the churches for the work of the apostle. I think this kind of thinking stands behind II Cor 11:8 and Phil 4:14-19. Financial support from one church which makes possible work in another does not mean only that Paul can pay his bills. It is the concrete participation of his churches in his work of evangelism. It may be that Paul did not believe he could be a missionary without his churches. This may be in sharp contrast to opponents who come to Corinth to impart something of their splendor to the church, but who do not need the believers there in any important sense.

Paul understands the establishment of churches by him, with accompanying signs, to be the evidence that God is powerfully at work in his ministry. He sees his continuing ministry as dependent in some sense on

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[1] See II Cor 13:5-10, especially Paul's use of δόκιμος and cognates.

[2] See II Cor 8 and 9, Rom 15:30-33. Vs. 33 begins with ἵνα. The sense is: "Pray for my acceptability in Jerusalem in order that I may then come to see you." The Romans can contribute something to Paul's visit to Jerusalem (their prayers); Paul's visit to Rome is dependent on how he is received in Jerusalem. (I do not think one can appeal to the threat of imprisonment in Jerusalem to explain the latter.)

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71 his church's fidelity to the gospel he preaches and therefore its fidelity to him. The yardstick by which he measures his own faithfulness to God's call is the degree to which his efforts succeed in founding and maintaining churches.

The argument in 10:12-18 is related to battle imagery in several ways. The most obvious is the statement in 11:8. For our purposes, the verse should be translated, "I plundered other churches to get soldier's pay for my service to you." The battle overtones of both the verb συλάω, and the word used for money, ὀψώνιον,[1] are clear and, especially in light of the military motifs in 10:3-6, would not be missed by Paul's readers. This suggests that Paul sees his ministry as warfare.

The reference to obedience in 10:6 is also related to Paul's measure. If his work depends on his churches, that is like a military commander's dependence on his troops in battle. If they do not obey orders, the battle may be lost.

The same is true with tearing down and building up. In 10:4 and 5 Paul speaks of destroying things; in 10:8 and 13:10 he makes clear that it is not the Corinthians he destroys. On the contrary, troops must be built up in order to fight. What is destroyed is something else.[2]

Behind the multiple images of space and extension in 10:12-18[3] and behind the battle motif of 10:3-6 stands the notion of two spheres of power.

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[1]This word is used by Paul in I Cor 9:7 and discussed in the previous section of the thesis.

[2]The battle imagery in 10:3-6 will be discussed in detail below.

[3]The vocabulary of words for increase and extension are heaped up upon one another in these verses. They are rarely used by Paul elsewhere:

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72 Paul and his opponents share this notion but understand it differently. The opponents accuse Paul (10:2) of 'walking according to the flesh' (περιπατοῦντες κατὰ σάρκα). They presumably think they walk according to the Spirit. Or: there is a realm of the flesh and a realm of the Spirit. Those who belong to the latter are those who are of Christ. (The question is: does Paul belong to that group?)

For Paul, here as elsewhere, things are not so simple. He indicates this by answering the charge against him: we walk <u>in</u> the flesh (and so do you!), but we do not fight <u>according</u> to the flesh. That is, one does not live wholly in either sphere, but in both, or at the point where they meet. In 10:3-6, more clearly than elsewhere, the meeting is in warfare. The description of what one does in the war, what weapons one has, what enemies one opposes, is a description of the life of the believer at the juncture of the ages.

II Cor 10:12-18 contributes to our understanding of the battle imagery because Paul speaks here of <u>territory</u>. To press the military

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αὐξάνω	Paul also uses in I Cor 3:6, 7; II Cor 9:10
ἐφικέσθαι	Not used elsewhere by Paul
κανών	Used by Paul in Gal 6:16
μεγαλύνω	Used by Paul in Phil 1:20, the cognate adverb in Phil 4:10
μέτρον	Used by Paul in Rom 12:3
ὑπερέκειν	Not used elsewhere by Paul
ὑπερεκτείνω	Not used elsewhere by Paul
φθάνω	Used by Paul in Rom 9:31; Phil 3:16; I Th 2:16; 4:15

Paul is very much concerned with spatial territory which gets bigger in this passage!

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73 metaphor, we can say that where Paul has founded churches, there the new age, the sphere of God's power, has established a beachhead, from which the battle can be carried further.

This might be regarded as overinterpretation or a highly figurative way to speak, were it not for 11:8. There Paul speaks explicitly about the founding of the Corinthian church made possible by military support from another 'beachhead.'[1]

Power and weakness. The second way in which Paul uses the challenge to his apostolate as an occasion to speak about authentic Christian life at the turn of the ages is by restating his argument on power and weakness. He has dealt with this issue twice before in the Corinthian correspondence.[2] In both passages, Paul has opposed God's power (and the apostle's/Christian's weakness) to a claim of exaltation from his readers. In I Cor 1:18-4:21, the claim was to wisdom, an exalted spiritual sophistication; in II Cor 2:14-6:13; 7:2-4, the claim was to splendor found in the visiting apostles. Both of these issues are part of the perennial problem in Corinth,

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[1]One must not try to push Paul's metaphors too hard. Normally it is vanquished enemies who are plundered for the soldier's material support. That is, of course, not how Paul thinks of the Philippians. This fact makes his use of the metaphor all the more striking -- he really must have had war in mind.

[2]The first discussion is found in I Cor 1:18-4:21; the second in II Cor 2:14-6:13; 7:2-4. In what follows I take II Cor 1-9 to be written before chs. 10-13, but the argument could be reversed. Paul could have found it necessary to restate the issue first discussed in I Cor 1:18-4:21, and then, after reconciliation with the Corinthians, return to the matter as he clearly preferred to deal with it, in II Cor 4:14-6:13; 7:2-4. In this case, the shift, especially in 6:8, which is noted above (pp. 47, 50, in the section on II Cor 6:7) is a reminder of the way he restated the argument in II Cor 10-13. However, I believe this is not as probable as the reconstruction I am using.

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74 which Paul calls 'boasting.'[1] We noted above that in the second statement of the power/weakness argument, Paul qualifies the weakness of the apostle somewhat. In II Cor 6:3-10, and especially in vs. 8, we see that the apostle is not always and exclusively weak, humiliated, and dying. However, the weight of both arguments is the same: the power is God's alone; the apostle is the reflection of that power by his weakness and unimpressiveness. This is the pattern of the Cross. In chs. 10-13, this statement appears to have boomeranged. By using himself as an example for the Corinthians to follow,[2] Paul has furnished his opponents with all the ammunition they need against him. The congregation is no longer on Paul's side, so that he can write to them, counting on their acceptance of him.[3] The relationship of mutuality has broken down. In the face of this development, Paul feels he is forced to change his argument. He is extremely reluctant to do so. In fact, he is unable to do so. He tries, but cannot sustain the new attempt.

The new strategy would be to beat the opponents at their own game, by showing that even on their (wrong) terms Paul out-qualifies them. Paul declares his intention to do just this in 11:1, 16-17, 21; 12:1, 11, and declares with irony that he would not do such a thing in 10:12. In each case, he calls such procedure foolish and in no case can he sustain the attempt.[4] These chapters are difficult to understand, as the attempt by

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[1] See I Cor 4:19-20. 'Talk' was a problem in Corinth long before the superlative apostles arrived. It is the self-exaltation or boasting which links the Corinthians and the superlative apostles. The latter, arriving in Corinth, found a receptive church.

[2] For example, I Cor 2:1-5; 4:1-7; II Cor 4:1-12; 6:3-10.

[3] See I Cor 3:5-9; 4:14-15; II Cor 6:11-13; 7:2-4.

[4] In 11:21bf, for example. In vs. 23, Paul shifts to familiar arguments. One finds 12:1-5 followed by vss. 7-10. In these passages Paul gives his enemies material to use against him, at a time when he knows that is what they will almost surely do. He just cannot seem to help himself.

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75 Paul to meet the worsened situation. In them, he shifts from pleading to anger, from appeal to denunciation and threats. I cannot help feeling that, if his opponents were really as implacable as they appear to have been, Paul is here again giving them more weapons to use against him.

At two points in II Cor 10-13, Paul speaks about the power of God in ways which go beyond what he has so far written to the Corinthians. The first point involves a development in his Christology, or better, in his way of understanding his relation to Christ. In 13:3b-4, the apostle's living according to the pattern of the cross is restated to allow for his exercise of power to discipline his congregation.[1]

The statements are complex, in a way typical of Paul, because the reality he points to is paradoxical. The sense is something like: "Christ was weak on the cross but he no longer is. He lives now on the basis of (ἐκ) God's power. (That is why he is now powerful among you,[2] because he was crucified in weakness. He passed through weakness to his present power.) We are weak in him, in his sphere. But we will live with him (as he lives, by virtue of belonging to him) on the basis of the power of God, in relation to you." That is, "Because we are 'of Christ,' we have access to the power of God in which he lives, with which we will deal with you."[3]

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[1]The context of these verses is 13:1-2, where Paul threatens punishment according to lines already laid down and clear to his readers. It is this disciplining which will show his power. The sins are those mentioned in 12:20-21, not the rebellion against Paul's authority. The Corinthians would, of course, agree with 13:3b, "...(Christ) is powerful in you." However, what Paul means to use as a manifestation of God's power is not at all what they had in mind.

[2]γάρ, at the beginning of vs. 4, has the meaning 'because.'

[3]See the diagram of these sentences on p. 16

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Χριστοῦ,

13:3b ὃς οὐκ ἀσθενεῖ
εἰς ὑμᾶς
ἀλλὰ δυνατεῖ
ἐν ὑμῖν.

13:4 καὶ γὰρ ἐσταυρώθη
ἐξ ἀσθενείας,
ἀλλὰ ζῇ
ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ.
καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀσθενοῦμεν
ἐν αὐτῷ,
ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν
σὺν αὐτῷ
ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ
εἰς ὑμᾶς.

77 The parallel structure of the statements is obvious, but it is important to note that Paul does not set up a completely consistent parallel relation between Christ and himself. That is what his opponents are doing: "Christ is glorified; we are glorified." Paul sticks to his basic point, that at the turn of the ages, there is a difference between Christ and us. We continue to be weak in Christ's sphere. For this reason, Paul does not say, "We are powerful among you." The prepositional phrases at the end of vs. 4 carefully qualify the apostle's power. It is limited to what is necessary to deal with the problems in the church, among those for whom he is responsible. He has power to discipline and punish the Corinthians, if necessary.[1]

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[1]The future tense, ζήσομεν, in 13:4, refers to Paul's coming visit to Corinth, 12:14; 13:1-2. (See also 10:2, 11; 13:10.) It is not the same future reference as that in 10:8, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι. This latter does not refer to the coming visit. What Paul fears at that time is recorded in 12:20-21. It refers to the final conclusion of Paul's ministry, namely, the parousia, at which time he is certain that his understanding and not his opponents' will be accepted. The clue to this interpretation of 10:8 is to be found in Rom 5:5 and 9:33, where the cognate verb καταισχύνω is used in allusions to Ps 22:6 and perhaps Ps 25:3, 20 (LXX Ps 21 and 24), and Is 28:16.

The Nestle apparatus, however, reflects the problems which various scribes had with the future tense, ζήσομεν. They knew their Paul well enough to be bothered by it. The four variant readings listed show the attempts to deal with the problem:

The substitution of σὺν αὐτῷ for ἐν αὐτῷ by ℵ AGit sy^{p} may have occurred because the former phrase occurs almost immediately after the latter. It may also be an attempt to tighten the parallel between present and future: "We are now weak with him; we will in the future live by the power of God with him." If this is the cause of the variant, the scribe responsible for it is sticking to Paul's normal way of speaking about weakness and power, but misinterpreting the future tense.

The substitution of the passive future for the active future by Rpm also suggests that the scribe understood the reference to indicate the parousia. He may have had I Cor 15:22 in mind.

78 The context set for the whole passage by 10:1 and 13:10 further qualifies Paul's claim to power. The note of appeal, the plea that he might not have to use his authority, is dominant. In this connection Paul speaks in 10:1 of Christ as 'meek' (πραΰτης) and 'gentle' (ἐπιείκεια). Here the parallel between Christ and Paul is stronger. They can both be described with the same or very similar words. To speak of Christ as meek and gentle is, of course, to counter what Paul believes to be the wrong Christology of his opponents.[1] In this connection, however, it may be noted that even the power of Christ is not his own, but God's.[2]

The substitution of ἐν ὑμῖν for σὺν ὑμῖν by $P^{46}D^{*}33e$ may have occurred because the former is found so close in the text. But it may also be that the scribe perceived that the future tense was not a reference to the parousia. With perhaps I Th 5:10 and 4:17 in mind, he changed the σύν to ἐν in order to avoid the possible misunderstanding.

The omission of εἰς ὑμᾶς by $BD^{3}r$ arm also looks to me as if it was caused because the scribe thought the verb referred to the parousia.

That all of these variants are secondary is clear not only from the fact that the manuscripts vary so, and thus from weak external evidence, but also from the diagram of the sentences on p. . The prepositional phrases as Nestle has them are accounted for by the chiastic structure:

Vss. 3b and 4d εἰς ὑμᾶς

Vss. 3b and 4c ἐν αὐτῷ and ἐν ὑμῖν.

The σὺν αὐτῷ is necessary in this structure for Paul to make clear that the power of God out of which the apostle functions is his only by virtue of his belonging to Christ.

[1]Cf. 11:4, 'another Jesus.' I refer, of course, to the picture of Jesus as divine man. Cf. Georgi, cited in section on II Cor 6:7.

[2]The phrase in 13:4, ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ qualifies the verb, συνεσεῖ in vs. 3b. In 12:9, Paul speaks of the 'power of Christ,' but in 12:8-9a, 'the Lord' refers to God. One is reminded of I Cor 15:27-28. Jesus as the divine man, the notion brought by the superlative apostles, would have been a welcome addition to the Corinthians' exalted Anthropos Christology.

79 In II Cor 10:4 Paul speaks about the power and weakness issue in a way which also goes beyond what he has previously said. He is answering a charge against his apostolate. He uses the challenge as an occasion to discuss authentic Christian life at the turn of the ages.

Paul is accused of walking according to the flesh (10:2), a charge related to his unimpressiveness, his being ταπεινός (10:1). The implication is that this disqualifies him as an apostle. The opposite of walking according to the flesh is presumably walking according to the spirit.[1] The opponents are no doubt claiming that this is what they do. A person lives in one realm or the other.

Paul's distinction between ἐν σαρκί and κατὰ σάρκα in 10:3 makes clear his refusal to put the matter in this way: "we walk in the flesh but...not according to the flesh." The juncture of the ages comes into view. One does not live wholly in one sphere or the other, but in touch with both.

That the juncture of the ages is the battlefield for Paul is clearer in this passage than anywhere else in the corpus. 'To wage war' (στρατεύομαι) stands in parallel with 'to walk,' that is, to live. "We do not make war according to the flesh" introduces the longest and most sustained military imagery in Paul's writings. It will be discussed in detail below. For the moment, we focus on the statement in vs. 4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly (σαρκικά) but powerful τῷ θεῷ. The presence of the phrase, δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ,

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[1] For previous discussion about the Spirit and the spiritual, see I Cor 3:1-5 (written before the splendid apostles came); II Cor 3:7-4:6. Paul does not use these terms in chs. 10-13. See 11:4, where he says in effect, we are talking about completely different realities.

instead of the expected πνευματικός, is the signal that Paul intends to put the issue between himself and his opponents in terms of power. How does one recognize the true apostle? The answer for Paul is: by the way in which the power of God is manifested in him. In addition to what Paul says about this elsewhere in these chapters,[1] and before he says anything else, he speaks of making war. God's power is manifested by the apostle in his fighting.[2] II Cor 10:4 recalls II Cor 6:7, where Paul says that the apostle commends himself, among other ways, by (ἐν) the power of God, through (διά) the weapons of righteousness. Here as elsewhere, Paul insists on his basic and persistent affirmation. The apostle does not have anything of his own to commend himself. But he is not empty-handed. He receives what he needs from God. Here what he needs are weapons, because he is at war.

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[1] In 12:9 and elsewhere, the power of God is manifested in the apostle's weakness; in 12:12, in the founding of the church (cf. 10:12-18); in 13:3-4, in the apostle's authority and capacity to discipline church members.

[2] The RSV translation of δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, 'the weapons...have divine power to...' is too weak. The dative has been widely misunderstood by scholars, I think. Moule (Idiom Book of NT Greek, p. 46) believes it may be an intensifying dative, a Semitism, like that in Jonah 3:3. He also cites Acts 7:20. BDF (para. 188) call it a dativ commodi, cite other examples in Paul (Rom 6:10, 11; II Cor 5:13; Gal 2:19), and comment that Paul uses this form loosely. Turner (p. 238) calls the other examples in Paul datives of reference, but 10:4 a dativ commodi. Plummer and Hering agree. Denny calls it an ethical dative, to be translated "vaguely, 'divinely powerful'" and cites Jonah 3:3. All of this does not help very much, I think. For one thing, all of the other examples in Paul have the dative modifying a verb; in 10:4 it modifies an adjective. Paul uses the adjective δυνατά because he wants a parallel to the adjective σαρκικά. But the thrust is surely similar to δύναμις θεοῦ, used twice in II Cor 13:4 and in I Cor 1:18, 24, δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ in II Cor 12:9. The meaning is not vaguely 'divinely powerful' or even 'powers in the service of God.' It is the very power of God himself. I doubt if Paul ever used the word θεός in any construction to mean vaguely 'divine.'

81 The function of battle imagery in II Cor 10:3-6; 11:8. The metaphor of warfare occurs in the introductory paragraph of chs. 10-13. In this passage, Paul prepares for much of what he will say in the four chapters. Specifically, he tries to reverse the charge that he is humble when with the Corinthians, bold when he writes: he begins with appeal, a plea that he will not be forced to act with authority when he comes. The recipients of such action will be those who make a related charge against Paul, that he 'walks according to the flesh.' It is Paul's response to this charge which introduces the battle imagery.

Instead of speaking about warfare, Paul could have replied in something like the following way: "For although we walk in the flesh, we do not live according to the flesh. We live rather according to the Spirit" (or, if as I argued above, he does not want to use his opponents' set of terms: "we live by the power of God"). He could then have written all of what follows in chs. 10-13. The battle imagery is not essential to the issues he takes up, nor does he return to the terms which express it in what follows.[1]

The beginning and end of the battle passage show that it is closely related to the problems in Corinth. As noted above, Paul's distinction between ἐν σαρκί and κατὰ σάρκα in vs. 3 is meant to counter the opponents' notion that they live wholly in the spiritual sphere. Rather, Paul says, we live in touch with both spheres and because of this we fight.

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[1]The exception is καθαίρεσις, found in 10:8; 13:10. The word, in and of itself, is not military.

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Likewise, the final clause of the passage, "when your obedience is complete," obviously refers to the situation in the church. The clause modifies the participial clause which precedes it ("being ready to condemn all disobedience") as the antithetical contrast between disobedience and obedience makes clear. In line with normal syntactical structure,[1] the action of the ὅταν clause precedes that of the participial clause. That is, the two together mean "When your obedience is complete, we will be ready to condemn all disobedience." I suggested above that this verse is related to 10:12-18, where Paul speaks about the way in which his work as apostle, preaching the gospel and founding churches, depends on the faithfulness of his churches. At the end of his long military metaphor, where he speaks of condemning defeated enemies,[2] Paul returns to the Corinthians to include them in the picture he is drawing. The disobedience to be condemned is not theirs,[3] for they are not Paul's enemies. But they are not outside the arena of the war. They are like troops whose obedience is necessary to fight and win it.[4] It may be that Paul wishes his readers to understand that their obedience is the precondition of the whole description of war, that the ὅταν clause modifies all three of the participial clauses.

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[1]Cf. Bauer, on ὅταν, Turner, p. 112 for discussion of a ὅταν clause in which the verb is aorist subjunctive.

[2]Vs. 6a is discussed below in its relation to vss. 3-5.

[3]Despite the fact that 13:1-2 might suggest this.

[4]Of course, Paul would not regard his whole ministry as undermined if the Corinthians continued to be disobedient. But he is here appealing to them, refusing to accept their present rebellion as permanent, and insisting that he does not fight alone.

83 The three participial clauses in vss. 4b-6a modify the finite verb in vs. 3, στρατευόμεθα, as shown in the diagram on the following page.[1] The participles clearly spell out the action of the verb, 'to make war.' Furthermore, they constitute a kind of progression; in battle the destruction of the enemies' territory, weapons, fortifications, and so on, is followed by the taking of prisoners, which is in turn followed by the judging/condemnation of the enemies. The imagery is maintained consistently to the end of vs. 6. The present participles indicate present and continuing action. Paul describes what life is like for the apostle at the juncture of the ages.

The enemies are named in the direct objects of the participles. They both relate to and differ from the opponents in Corinth. Emphasis falls on those things which are being destroyed. In vs. 4, Paul first says that the power of God is given as a weapon for the destruction of strongholds, fortifications (ὀχυρώματα), then that he (and those with him) destroy two things which stand against the knowledge of God. The first element in the warfare, destruction, receives more attention from Paul than the others: it is emphatically placed in the sentence; the verb 'to destroy' (καθαιρέω) is used immediately after the substantive (καθαίρεσις); more is said about what is destroyed than about the objects of other elements in the battle imagery; and Paul twice states (10:8 and 13:10) that the Corinthians are not the objects of destruction.

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[1] Plummer suggests (in his note on 10:5, p. 276) that the construction is doubtful and cites II Cor 7:5; 8:20, and 9:11 as evidence that Paul "frequently has nominative participles without any regular connection...." While I grant his point in the texts cited, I think it is not true that the construction of these verses is irregular, nor that Paul is 'frequently' guilty of faulty syntax. On the contrary, although his sentences are often very complex, their construction is almost invariably correct.

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10:3 γὰρ οὐ στρατευόμεθα
κατὰ σάρκα
περιπατοῦντες
ἐν σαρκὶ

10:4 γὰρ τὰ ὅπλα οὐ [ἔστιν] σαρκικὰ
τ. στρατείας ἡμῶν
ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ
τῷ θεῷ
πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων
καθαιροῦντες λογισμοὺς } κατὰ τ. γνώσεως τ. θεοῦ
καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα
ἐπαιρόμενον }
καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα
εἰς τ. ὑπακοὴν τ. Χριστοῦ
καὶ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι παρακοὴν
πᾶσαν
ἐν ἑτοίμῳ
ὅταν ἡ ὑπακοὴ πληρωθῇ
ὑμῶν

85 The λογισμοί and ὕψωμα specify what is meant by ὀχυρώματα, as the use of the cognate verb suggests. Strongholds, enemy fortifications come naturally to mind in the development of the figure, but are not very specific. Paul speaks of 'strongholds' because he intends to convey the notion of real power antithetical to his.[1] The enemy's strongholds are antithetical to the knowledge of God. This helps to show the relationship between what is destroyed and the Corinthian problem: knowledge has been an issue all along. In II Cor 2:14, Paul refers to the apostle's 'spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of God,' at the beginning of his discussion about who is the true apostle. In 4:6, he speaks of the 'knowledge of the glory of God' at the end of the discussion about glory. This knowledge shines in the apostle's heart, not his face. In 11:6, Paul not only claims to have knowledge, but that the Corinthians know this very well. One way to state the issue between Paul and his opponents, then, is to ask: who has knowledge of God and how does one know that someone has knowledge of God?

In his opening salvo, Paul claims to destroy those things which stand against the knowledge of God. He has weapons provided by the very power of God himself to do so. What stands against the knowledge of God? I think the terms Paul uses must be understood both specifically in relation to the problems in Corinth and against a wider background. I will discuss both terms in the context of events in Corinth first, then go on to consider the wider background.

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[1] Plummer, among many other scholars, cites Prov 21:22, where the author uses battle imagery. If Paul really had this text in mind, it is very ironic, for in it he who brings down strongholds is the σοφός. That is not a notion Paul shared.

86 The important clue for the interpretation of λογισμοί is Paul's use of the cognate, λογίζομαι, in chs. 10-13.[1] He and his opponents consider things differently. In 10:7, Paul wants his opponent to consider again; in 10:11, a reconsideration will bring a change of opinion. Paul offers an example of his own considering in 11:5 and of how he wishes to be considered in 12:6. In the background of the Corinthian situation there is the problem of the λόγος σοφίᾳ.

Paul employs λογισμοί in Rom 2:15. Here they are 'conflicting,' inconsistent and undependable. Bauer suggests that the word be translated in 10:4, 'sophistries,' and cites secular Greek authors as well as Wis 1:3, 5; 11:15; Prov 6:18 for the use of the word in a negative sense.[2] The sense in 10:4 is clearly negative. Moreover, the word must be distinguished from νοήματα, which are not destroyed, but taken captive. It seems to me that the best translation is 'sophistries,' a word which suggests illegitimate and quibbling thoughts.[3] This is certainly what he thinks of the opponents' line of reasoning.

The clue for interpretation of πᾶν ὕψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον is Paul's use of the cognate verb ὑψόω in 11:7 and ἐπαίρω in 11:20. In the latter verse, the opponents are accused of acting

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[1]Paul uses the verb five times in these chapters: 10:2, 7, 11; 11:5; 12:6.

[2]A glance at the translations shows the variety of renderings: RSV: 'arguments,' NEB: 'sophistries,' Letters to Young Churches: 'deceptive fantasy,' the Cottonpatch Version: 'learned discourses.'

[3]It is important to avoid the temptation to render λογισμοί and ὕψωμα with military vocabulary in order to strengthen Paul's overall image. He is here stating what the strongholds are; what needs destroying. Just as 'thoughts' are not taken captive in normal war, and 'disobedience' is not condemned by the battle's victor, 'sophistries' and 'exalted beings' are not destroyed in normal battle.

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87 presumptuously.[1] However one is to understand ὕψωμα, what is exalted is linked to the opponents. In 11:7, Paul speaks of having humbled himself in order to exalt (ὑψόω) the Corinthians.[2] This is an odd statement for Paul, whose chief concern about the Corinthians was, from the beginning, their boasting. It may be partly ironic. The context makes clear that Paul is referring to the question of support. He is contrasting his own stance in relation to them with the self-exaltation of his opponents, who were presumably receiving money from the congregation. By using the words ταπεινόω and ὑψόω, Paul affirms mutuality against self-aggrandizement. He is a soldier receiving his pay from elsewhere (11:8) in order to serve, that is, to exalt the church members. His service is to build them up, not to destroy them (10:8; 13:10). What he destroys is anything exalted, lifted up against the knowledge of God.

What Paul destroys, sophistries and exalted things, are characteristics of the opponents, but the enemies are not the opponents themselves.[3]

The wider background of ὕψωμα is suggested in Rom 8:39, in which they are among the potential threats to men. As the presence in the list of such threats of ἀρχαί and δύναμεις suggests, the ὕψωμα are for Paul the enemies who, according to I Cor 15:24, the reigning Christ is destroying.[4] In I Cor 15, it was not clear that Christians were

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[1] Paul uses the verb in these two places only.

[2] Ταπεινόω recalls the charge recorded in 10:1 that Paul is humble when he is with them.

[3] In 11:13-15, the opponents are false apostles, deceitful workmen, servants of Satan. Paul does his best to undermine their influence in Corinth and he clearly believes that important things are at stake. But he is not out to destroy the opponents.

[4] In I Cor 15:24, the verb is καταργέω.

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88 actively engaged in the fight, although it was suggested that their dying daily was a means by which Christ fights. In II Cor 10:3-6, and 11:8, the Christian's status as a soldier and his participation in the warfare is explicit. Like I Cor 15, the enemies are not men, but powers which may have dominion over them.[1]

The νοήματα to be taken captive to obedience to Christ are mentioned often in II Cor. In 2:11, it is Satan who has thoughts of dominating Paul and his readers. In 3:14, Jews' thoughts are 'hardened' and in 4:4, unbelievers' thoughts are blinded by the god of this world. In 11:3, Paul fears the Corinthians' thoughts will be led astray from...Christ.[2] Νοήματα are vulnerable, then, susceptible to dominance and, according to 10:5, in need of a master. This is in line with what has been said above about powers which have dominion over men. It is clear that Paul is worried about the line of thought along which the Corinthians are being led. Again, the striking thing about the statement is that Paul says he takes thoughts captive to Christ; the apostle is the key figure in the battle. Again, it is not people who are taken captive.

The condemnation of disobedience is to be understood along the same lines. The figure called to mind in this context by Paul's use of ἐκδικέω is that of the victor in battle who holds court and condemns defeated enemies. I think disobedience is suggested to Paul because he has just spoken of obedience to Christ, and because he is concerned about the Corinthians' rebellion. It is important to translate ἐκδικέω by the

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[1] I will discuss Rom 8:39 in the following section of this chapter; I will discuss ὕψωμα further in the following chapter.

[2] Elsewhere Paul uses this word only in Phil 4:7.

89 word 'condemn,' or something similar, rather than by 'punish.' One cannot punish disobedience, but only disobedient people. Paul is very careful throughout these verses not to make people the enemy. It is striking that Paul should speak of himself as condemning, even with this qualification. One thinks of I Cor 4:3-5, for example. In II Cor 10:6, it is Paul who judges, condemns.

Why does Paul use battle imagery in II Cor 10:3-6; 11:8? What brings it to mind? How does it help him? One answer to the first of these questions seems inescapable to me: Paul uses battle imagery here because he feels himself to be embattled and facing possible defeat. He is deeply hurt by the Corinthians' apparent rejection of him and of his ministry to them. He is very angry at the opponents who have undermined his work in Corinth and who, from Paul's point of view, endanger the church. He uses the language of fighting because he knows he has to fight.

The way in which he develops his metaphor shows, however, that it serves him by providing the terms of a description of authentic Christian life at the juncture of the ages, where two spheres of power collide and do battle. Paul says to his readers, in effect: "There is a war going on. We are soldiers on the battlefield. The most important issues of life are at stake. You have got it all wrong. You are concerned about the wrong issues; you are against the wrong things. While you are defining yourselves as spiritual over against others (including me!) whom you regard as 'walking according to the flesh,' and while you are busy identifying signs of your exaltation and comparing others as inferior -- while you are quibbling

about such things, the fate of the cosmos and of all of us is being decided on the battlefield.[1]

"It is not I who stand against you. You and I stand together (I hope!) against real enemies: the principalities and powers, which have long enslaved people, exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. They must be destroyed. We are called to destroy them. Whatever gets in the way of that endeavor is beside the point. But given that reality, one can see other enemies: there are ways of thinking and considering which are sophistries -- however impressive they may sound. These must be destroyed too, if we are to get on with our God-given calling. Heaven knows the thoughts of our minds are unstable, vulnerable, undependable things. They must be taken captive to obedience to Christ, if we are not to misunderstand our time and our job. In the war which is going on, there is real power arrayed against us and real danger. We must be troops which obey orders, if we are not to betray the calling and each other.

"We are not defenseless in this battle. The power of God himself is given to us, not so that we may congratulate ourselves on our superiority to others, but so that we can fight. That power has nothing to do with the things you see as evidence of God's acceptance. Do you not see the existence of the church as concrete evidence of the active power of God among you? All right, you reject me because I am unimpressive, unglorious. Who brought the gospel to you; who made the creation of the church in Corinth

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[1] I am reminded of a friend who is fond of saying, "I don't complain when the enemy shoots at me. I expect that; that is what the whole thing is all about. What really gets to me is when I turn to an ally for support in the battle and find his gun trained on me. That is what hurts."

possible? Do you not see the power of God at work there defeating the powers which oppose him? What comparable power is there in your boasting? What does it actually produce, except for dissension among you and a rift between you and me?

"Take another look at yourselves. Ask yourselves whether you are really as superior as you think. I hope you will recognize that we are your equals. It is not a matter of indifference to me what you think of us. After all, we serve in the same army. But the more important issue is that you do not make the wrong choice. Neither you nor we can finally prevail against the truth. On which side of the real battle will you fight?"

Conclusion

Battle imagery in II Corinthians is used to describe the present time. In no case does it appear that the expectation of the imminent Parousia brought the military metaphor to Paul's mind. In I Cor 15, Paul speaks of warfare in such a way as to link his argument to notions about a Messianic Kingdom found in some Jewish apocalyptic sources. That is, the distinction between a Messianic Kingdom and the Age to Come, together with the notion that the former is the time of the final eschatological battle between God's allies and enemies, seems to be in the background of what Paul says in I Cor 15. I have argued above that Paul applied this idea to the present: the present is the time in which Christ (the Messiah) reigns and does battle against the enemies of God. With the final defeat of those enemies, the Messiah will deliver the Kingdom to God. The Age to Come will have arrived.

This picture of what is going on now is presupposed in II Corinthians. In 7:5, Paul gives succinct but comprehensive expression to the conditions

under which the apostle lives and works in this time: "...we were afflicted at every turn -- fighting without and fear within." The statement is a summary of the line of thought Paul has developed in I Corinthians and in II Corinthians 1-7. Here in 7:5, battle imagery is related to suffering and death, as it was in I Cor. A look at the references to death in II Cor 1-7 fills in the picture and conforms to that given in I Cor 15. The form which the Messianic battle takes is the daily death of the apostle. Death is both the threatening enemy and the means for the manifestation of the power of God, the life of Christ.

The battle imagery in 7:5 is an important sign that Paul thinks of the present as the time of the Messianic war, because his attention is not fixed on the 'battles,' but on the 'fears.' Paul is reporting the alleviation of these with the coming of Titus. He has spoken also about the severe hardship and danger which accompanied his recent work. For Paul to speak of 'battles' in this context is evidence that both the 'fears' and the severe hardship are for him characteristics of the war which is going on.

In II Cor 6:7 and 10:3-6; 11:8, one finds something different in Paul's use of battle imagery. The Christian[1] is not only, as Paul has described him thus far, the one whose weakness and defeat and daily death manifest the power of God and contribute, in a paradoxical way, to the defeat of the enemies. Paul's convictions on the weakness of the Christian as a vehicle for God's power are not changed. But there is something more.

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[1]That Paul intends to speak about all Christians, and not only apostles, is clear from his repeated use of himself as an example for church members to follow. Paul certainly distinguishes at points between the apostle and the other believers, but he does not do so either at the point of the weakness of both or the fact that both are called to battle.

93 The Christian is now someone who fights, and fights aggressively. He has offensive as well as defensive weapons. Whereas in I Cor 15, the warrior was Christ, in II Cor 10:3-6; 11:8, he is the believer. While the objective of battle is the same, to defeat the enemy powers, the imagery is also used to speak about problems in the church in a way which makes clear the fact that Christians are soldiers who must be ready for battle.

Paul has tried and apparently failed to counter the Corinthians' persistent tendency to self-exaltation and boasting by claiming that the creation of the church out of nothing (I Cor 1:26-29) through the efforts of a weak apostle (I Cor 2:1-5) was the manifestation of God's powerful presence. He now speaks about his work among them in a way which suggests that this church is a beachhead in the battle between two opposing spheres of power which collide at the juncture of the ages. Church members are thus troops under orders, disciplined into readiness, equipped by the power of God, soldiers in battle.

Battle Imagery in Romans

6:13, 23; 7:23; 8:35, 37; 13:12

Romans 6:13, 23

> Do not yield your members to sin as weapons of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as weapons of righteousness.
>
> For the soldier's pay of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ our Lord.

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Literary context and Paul's purposes. The wider context of Rom 6:13 and 23 is the section consisting in chs. 5-8.[1] The immediate context is ch. 6, in which Paul discusses the problem of sin. The question is first raised in 3:8, then reiterated in 6:1, 15.[2] In what he has written before ch. 6, Paul has made the following points about sin:

1. Rom 2:12-16, 25-29. Sin, that which the Law opposes, must and will be dealt with; there will be no glossing over sin.

2. 2:2-11. Sinners will receive their just punishment.

3. 3:9, 22b-23. All people, Jews and Gentiles, are sinners.

4. 3:21-22a, 24-26; 5:6-11. God has dealt with sin in Jesus Christ.[3]

5. 3:9; 5:12-21. Sin represents a realm of power opposed to God's realm of grace.[4] As preparation for Paul's discussion of sin in ch. 6,

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[1]I do not attempt to review or evaluate the voluminous critical comments on these chapters. What follows is the result of my own literary analysis. Where I am indebted to others, this is noted.

[2]Paul gives advance notice of the three major questions he will discuss in relation to the present time. The second, after his discussion of sin in ch. 6, is the problem of the Law. While it is raised in 3:31 and alluded to in 6:15, he deals with it only in 7:1-8:4. The third question has to do with the Jews and is discussed in chs. 9-11. It is prefigured in 3:1, 9. Behind all of these is the issue of God's justice, mentioned in 3:5b and taken up again in 9:14ff.

The rhetorical questions in these verses form an outline to the epistle, superimposed on the one I have suggested. (This position was first taken, I think, by Jeremias, in "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen," in Studia Paulina, eds. J. N. Sevenstar and W. D. van Unnik.)

To complete the outline according to major discussions, it is necessary to add: 8:5-30, which is a continuation of the problem of sin found in ch. 6, this time taking as the major set of terms 'flesh' and 'Spirit'; and 8:31-39, which forms a summary and conclusion to the passage begun in 5:1.

[3]In ch. 4, sin is dealt with from the human side by faith which is reckoned to Abraham and to 'us' (4:24) as righteousness.

[4]See also 5:2. In a striking spatial image, Paul speaks of having peace and access (προσαγωγήν) to grace. The Greek word means something like 'haven.' Grace is a place, a sphere to which believers have been admitted.

95 5:12-21 is especially important in two ways. First, what is at stake is one humanity. Adam and Christ do not each stand at the head of a group of people. Each is the representative of the whole of mankind, and the one through whom the characteristic conditions of life are brought into existence and made powerful among men.[1] This is shown by the fact that the words 'all' and 'many' are equivalents in this passage (vss. 12, 15, 18). In vs. 12, "death spread to all men"; in vs, 15, "the many died" and "grace ...abounded to the many"; in vs. 18, "...condemnation for all men... acquittal and life for all men."

Second, the temporal terms are important. Death (vss. 14, 17) and sin in death (vs. 21) reigned in the past as a power over men. The verbs are all aorist. On the opposite side, the temporal signs are not so simple: In vs. 15, grace 'abounded'; in vs. 17, "those who receive the abundance of grace...will reign" in the future; in vs. 19, "many will be made righteous"; and in vs. 21, "so that...grace might also reign" (subjunctive mood).

The aorist tense of the description of sin and death as rulers tells us that their reign is broken -- they are no longer in control. But grace and those who receive it are not yet reigning, although it has already 'abounded.'

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[1] It seems to me that this is the sense in which Adam is a type of one who is coming (5:15), that is, Christ. Christ, for Paul, is the man through whom, because of whom all men live. Adam is an antithetical type as the one through whom, because of whom all men died. I think it is not appropriate to speak of either in 5:12-21 as corporate men in whom all people existed/exist, or as heads of humanity. These notions appear in relation to Christ in Rom 6, but not, I think, in ch. 5. Note the preposition used in relation to the two -- it is always διά (vss. 12, 16, 17, 19). Each man is first, chronologically of the race of men, and as such, representative. Neither reigns in 5:12-21.

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96 Both of these points indicate that Paul is preparing to discuss a highly ambiguous situation in the present. It is not possible to draw a clear line between two sets of people represented by Adam and Christ; nor is it possible to draw a clear line between past and present.

Paul's argument in ch. 6 depends on the possibility of breaking the dominion of sin and death. The discussion is a development from 5:12-21. In the latter passage, it is clear that two realms exist, one of which is ruled by grace, through (because of) Christ. There is nothing said of Christ's death in 5:12-21; death is a ruler in the other dominion.

In 6:1-11, Christ's death and resurrection provide the possibility of breaking out of the dominion of sin and death. Of Christ's death Paul says: He died to sin (vs. 10), that is, as if he were under the dominion of sin (vs. 7, recalling II Cor 5:21). Hereafter, he is no longer under sin's dominion (vs. 7). Since he was raised, he will never die again; that is, he is free of death too (vs. 9). To be free of sin and death means to live τῷ θεῷ (vs. 10).

By his identification with Christ in baptism, the believer shares something of the things said of Christ. Paul repeatedly states that the identification with Christ in baptism is identification with him in his death.[1] The consequences are that the believer has died to sin (vs. 2); the body of sin may be destroyed (vs. 6); the one who has died may be free of the dominion of sin (vs. 7); he may consider himself dead to sin and

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[1] Baptism into his death, stated twice (vss. 3, 4), buried with him (vs. 4), united with him in a death like his (vs. 5).

97 alive to God in Christ (vs. 11); that is, he may walk in newness of life (vs. 4).[1]

Paul is clearly talking about two antithetical spheres of power. In vs. 6 especially, the phrase 'the body of sin' suggests a corporate body,[2] not simply the body of each believer. In this passage, Christ becomes the corporate man in whom the believers live (vss. 12 and 23), as they once lived in sin (vss. 1 and 2). The datives, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (vss. 2, 6, 10, 11) and τῷ θεῷ (vss. 10, 11), have the same force. It is important to note here that the rulers of the spheres, which in 5:12-21 were death (twice) and sin in death versus grace, those who receive grace, and so forth, here become 'sin' and 'God.'[3] Paul is answering a charge (3:8) that his Gospel does not deal seriously with sin, that it even encourages sin. His answer is that sin is not something one desires, but rejects, fearing punishment; it is slavery out of which the believer has been delivered; he is free not to sin.

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[1]Of course, Paul also speaks of the believer's resurrection in the future, as a parallel to Christ's. (Vss, 5, 8.) But what is most striking is that emphasis is on a present which is not yet resurrection.

[2]Cf. Tannehill, Dying and Rising with Christ, p. 24. The author's argument coincides with the one presented here at many points, especially in his appeal to the notion of two dominions or realms of power. In relation to the Anthropos speculation which appears to stand behind Paul's use of Adam, he cites (as do many scholars) Philo, Leg. Alle, I, 31, and the material presented by Grant, Gnosis, p. 77ff. While I agree with him that Paul makes use of such notions, which were in the air in his time, I think the Anthropos speculation in Rom 5 is dependent on the two-spheres idea which Paul got from Jewish apocalyptic thought.

[3]The statement is reminiscent of Gal 2:19, where the contrast is between Law and God. The argument spelled out in detail in Rom 5-8 about the two spheres of power is very similar to that expressed in Gal, in spite of the fact that in the latter the focus of attention is on the Law, while in Romans it is on sin.

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Does this mean that the believer has moved from one sphere of power, dominated by sin, into another, dominated by God? In 6:15-23, where Paul restates his case by using strict parallels ("you are either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness," and statements of this sort), he seems to say that Christians have changed spheres. But he knows perfectly well that this is too simple and he is driven to insert in the middle of his discussion (vs. 19) an apology for having pressed his parallelism too far.

The function of battle imagery in Rom 6:13, 23. Rom 6:12-14 is designed to qualify any notion of a simple shift from one sphere of power to another. The imperatives alone do this by saying, in effect, "you must choose." The future tense in vs. 14a has the same thrust.[1] The phrase in vs. 13, ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας (RSV: "as men who have been brought from death to life"), together with the imperative in vs. 11, λογίζεσθε ('consider yourselves') are strong signs of the same things. Ὡσεί means literally 'as if.' Paul does not say in vs. 11, "you are dead to sin," but "you must consider yourselves dead to sin." Are they or are they not still under the dominion of sin? The answer is, "that depends on how you look at yourselves."

As the battle imagery in II Corinthians suggested, Paul sees people in part as victims of forces greater than they. But they are also actors. They can and must choose, now that sin is not the only power in operation. They cannot choose to have no master; Paul has no idea of autonomous man. But they can choose to serve sin or God.[2] The choice involves readiness

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[1] BDF (para. 348) says in relation to the gnomic future that it indicates what is expected under certain circumstances. The sense here is: "If you do not yield to sin, sin will not rule over you."

[2] The datives in vs. 13 have the same force they do in 6:1-11. They refer to rulers of realms of power.

to fight. To speak of weapons is to say more than merely, "I will stand on this side and not on the other." Vss. 12 and 13a are parallel statements.[1] Not to allow sin to reign in your mortal bodies is the equivalent of not to yield yourselves to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. To yield yourselves to God and your members to him as weapons of righteousness are the same. To choose a side is to make available one's capacity to fight.

In these verses, 'mortal bodies' clearly means the believers themselves in the present.[2] The 'members' of the body give expression to the way the person functions, what he does with himself.[3] The choice of how to function is set out in vs. 19b,c in temporal terms: in the past, men yielded to impurity (unrighteousness, sin), but now they can yield to righteousness. The same verb occurs in vs. 16, where Paul makes the same point in terms of one choice leading to death, the other to righteousness.[4] In 7:5, we are told that as long as the sphere of power of sin reigned ("while we were living in the flesh"), sin (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) worked powerfully in one's members to produce death.

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[1]Vs. 13 begins μὴ οὖν; vs. 14, μηδέ.

[2]In the following, 'mortal bodies' is the equivalent of 'you': "Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies" and "Sin will not rule over you." Paul always uses θνητός to refer to human life now, in the present. Cf. I Cor 15:53, 54; II Cor 4:11; 5:4; Rom 1:23; 8:11.

[3]Paul's other uses of 'members' bear this out. In I Cor 6:15, one's members belong to Christ or to a prostitute, depending on what one does with them. In I Cor 12:27, he says that the believers, who are members of the body of Christ, have different functions, along the lines of the analogy in 12:17: each part of the body has its proper function.

[4]The expected antithesis to death, namely, 'life eternal,' is found in vs. 23. The presence of 'righteousness' in vs, 16 shows how concerned Paul is to deal seriously with the problem of sin.

100 But now, according to 8:11, God will give life to one's mortal body, if the Spirit dwells in him. Whether or not the Spirit dwells in one is a matter of his choice, as 8:12-17 makes plain.

To speak of the members of one's mortal body as weapons on one side or the other, in either the service of sin or God, is to say not only that the two spheres of power are at war with each other, but also that believers are on the battlefield. One can choose to fight on one side or the other, but one cannot choose to be neutral. Everyone is a soldier.

Why not do evil that good may come (3:8)? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound (6:1)? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace (6:15)? The answer to all of these questions is negative, because they presuppose a relationship between sin and grace which does not exist. The coming into operation of God's free gift of grace does not change the character of sin into something which aids the manifestation of grace. Rather, the coming of grace both reveals sin to be what it is, a sphere of power ruling over men and inimical to them, and creates another sphere of power from which to do battle against sin.

Rom 6:20-23 summarizes the chapter. All of the important contrasts used in the passage are there:

slaves	-	free men
sin	-	righteousness
death	-	eternal life
sin	-	God
sin	-	free gift of God

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101 Paul sums up by speaking of the consequences of one choice or the other. In vss. 21 and 22, he has spoken of these by using the term 'fruit' (καρπός). In 4:4, he has spoken of payment (μισθός) for work done. Why in 6:23 does he speak of soldier's pay (ὀψώνια), clearly a word associated with the military? The word stands in opposition to the 'free gift of God' (τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ). I think the reason is to give a clear answer to the questions in 6:1 and 15. That is: given the fact that sin and God rule over warring spheres of power, the result of sin is not grace abounding, but death. That is the payment soldiers receive who fight against the realm of God.

Romans 7:23

> ...but I see in my members another law which is at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.

The tone in this verse and the surrounding material is very different from that of 6:13 and 23. The battle imagery is used to picture Paul as the victim of war; the military terms are those which he has used in II Cor 10:3-6 (with himself as subject) to describe the soldier's fighting.[1] The 'members' which in 6:13 were weapons of righteousness or unrighteousness do not appear in this verse to be capable of fighting, nor does Paul appear to have control over them.

Literary context and Paul's purposes. The immediate context of 7:23 is 7:14-25, the verses in which Paul speaks about the division within

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[1]Paul uses ἀντιστρατεύω, a cognate of στρατεύω found in II Cor 10:3; and αἰχμαλωτίζω, found in 10:5. These are the only occurrences of the words in the Pauline corpus.

102 himself. In 7:13, his argument about the Law thus far is summed up. In 7:7, Paul begins to speak about the way the Law functions by the use of himself as the subject of the action. Sin, using the Law, victimized him, gained dominion over him. The 'I' is whole, the object of sin's action. From 7:7 through 7:25,[1] this 'I' is Paul the Jew; he speaks of himself before the turn of the ages, as a way of describing the Jew's situation.[2]

From vs. 14b, "but I am carnal (σαρκικός), sold under sin," Paul's argument moves on another step. He speaks of a divided self, or perhaps better, of a self inhabited by an inimical and powerful force, namely, sin. The discussion is controlled by the phrase in vs. 14, 'sold under sin.' When Paul says in vs. 18, "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh," he is not stating that his 'flesh' is evil, but that it is occupied (as enemy forces occupy territory not their own) by sin (vs. 17: "sin...dwells within me").[3] The statements in vss. 15, 19, and 20 about not being able to do good describe the person under an alien dominion, as vs. 20c makes clear.

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[1]With many students of Paul, I am puzzled by the fact that vss.24-25a seem to interrupt the argument. Vs. 25b and c could have followed vs. 23. The former is so typical of Paul that I cannot regard it as a gloss. On the whole, I think Paul is quite capable of writing ch. 7 as we have it.

[2]This is typical of Paul. He repeatedly uses himself as an example for his readers to follow. He repeatedly takes his opponents' positions and key terms as his starting point for argument.

[3]'Flesh' is here Paul himself, as is shown by the statement, "... within me, that is, in my flesh." He is talking about human life under the dominion of the alien force, sin. Of course, he also uses 'flesh' in different ways, cf. 8:9ff.

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103 In vss. 22-23, (25b) Paul speaks of various laws and various parts of, or aspects of, himself.[1] These can be set out as follows, in the interests of a search for clarity:

Laws	Paul
law of God	according to the inner man
another law	in my members
law of	my mind
law of sin	in my members

In addition to the opposition with which Paul's readers are now thoroughly familiar, that of (the law of) sin and (the law of) God, these verses now speak of another opposition. The latter is correlated to the former; as a war is going on between God and sin, in which the man is a soldier for one side or the other, so a war is also going on within the man. On one side, his members are occupied by a law which has power over

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[1] In vs. 21, the reference to 'law,' meaning apparently a principle (Bauer, NEB), is confusing and typical of Paul. It is a warning to students not to attempt to force on Paul a consistency and precision he does not exhibit, much less to build a systematic anthropology on too slender bases. I am thinking of Bultmann's discussion of 'mind' (TNT, Vol I, para. 19). Jewett, one of many who have criticized Bultmann on this score (p. 389), commits the same basic error when he says, "He (Paul) cannot say the 'true self' is the mind, for he retains the assumption that the καρδία is the center of the person...." The references to καρδία in Rom 5-8 (5:5; 6:17; 8:27) do not support such a claim.

In relation to the use of 'law' in vs. 21, I wonder occasionally how Paul expected his readers to understand him. In any case, I suppose they did not do word studies and perhaps were less concerned than we are with precision and consistency in concepts.

104 him; this is the law of sin which his flesh serves (vs. 25).[1] On the other side, there is a law of his mind, which is the 'inner man,'[2] which delights in the law of God and serves it. This law is warred against by the 'other law,' and the consequence is that Paul (me) is taken captive to sin. There can be no doubt, it seems to me, that Paul is here employing the widely used Hellenistic notion[3] that the real, true, authentic person is the self as mind; that the flesh is inimical to this real self.[4] Paul's purpose here is to discuss the divided self under the dominion of sin; the Hellenistic notions of mind versus body (but for Paul here, 'flesh') were the most obvious ones ready at hand.

The function of battle imagery in Romans 7:23. Paul employs the first person singular and interprets his experience as a Jew with regard to the Law. He has really tried to hear Jewish objections to his gospel and he deals very seriously with them. Why does he want to speak about a

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[1]Vs. 23, with its twice-used phrase, 'in my members,' is a tautology. The 'other law' is the law of sin (cf. vs. 20, "...sin which dwells in me"). Sin as the ruler of a realm of power inhabits the members. Paul's mania for speaking in antithetical parallels has caused him to write a very confusing sentence.

[2]That the 'inner man' and the 'law of the mind' are equivalents in this passage is shown by the fact that both respond positively to the law of God (vss. 22 and 25). Jewett, p. 389, insists that this identification is only implicit. On the contrary, I cannot believe Paul's readers would have missed the point.

[3]This is not just a Gnostic notion, as Jewett and others identify it. It goes back at least to Plato and was variously used by many others besides Gnostics.

[4]This much discussed point has usually been treated as part of the question of Paul's overall anthropology. (See note 1, preceding page.) The search for consistency has obscured the true background of Paul's argument and also his very lighthearted way of using imagery and notions from a variety of sources without thereby adopting the world views which undergird them.

105 divided self? Why is it not enough to speak of men dominated by sin, a power in whose sphere God's holy Law has become the chief means by which men are enslaved? I think Paul speaks of a divided self because he wants to include in his discussion a recognition that men under the power of sin do not want to do evil, to be opposed to God. Their enslavement is not such that they do not try to obey God (cf. 10:2). Somewhere in the real Jew there is delight in the law of God (as the Rabbis repeatedly show us), desire and attempts to obey it. Paul's point, of course, is that apart from the sphere of God's grace in and through Jesus Christ, such men do not succeed; they are defeated. The issue is not what one wills and intends; the issue is the power to do, to act.

I pointed out in connection with Rom 6:13 that when Paul employs the term 'members,' he refers to the person in his action, in what he does, in his functioning. Paul's use of the same term in 7:23 is related to the many uses in vss. 15-20 of the verbs of action.[1] The law in his members is the powerful law of sin, which makes it impossible for Paul to do what he wills. Battle imagery serves Paul in 7:23 by describing the victorious war sin wages against the will to obey God, and the consequent captivity of the victim.

With regard to νοῦς, one thinks of Paul at war in II Cor 10:3-6, taking captive every νόημα to obedience to Christ. There the νοήματα were seen to be wavering, untrustworthy, in need of a master, and vulnerable. In Rom 7:23, the νοῦς is weak, unable to fight successfully against the enemy.[2] That which wills and tries to do the good in a person does not

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[1] Ποιέω, used four times, πράσσω twice, and κατεργάζομαι four times.

[2] The relationship between the two words is obvious. Jewett, p. 383f., suggests that νόημα in II Cor may be a substitute for νοῦς.

106 have the power to do so. In 7:23, Paul tells us that people have not gone into captivity to sin like unresisting sheep; it took a battle to capture them. On the other hand, Paul knows that they never had a chance.

Romans 8:35, 37

> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
>
> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Literary context and Paul's purposes. Paul summarizes Rom 5-8 in 8:31-39, ending on a note of triumph and assurance.[1] The key question is twice mentioned: vs. 35: "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and vs. 39: "...will (not) be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." The expressions of God's love in the past give assurance for the future, and therefore also assurance in the present.

In addition to the list of what God has done in the past, found in vss. 29-30, Paul says of the past:

vs. 32 "He...did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all...."

vs. 34 "Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes who was raised from the dead...."

Of the future, Paul asks rhetorical questions, then expresses his conviction:

vs. 32 "...will he (God) not give us all things with him (Christ)?"

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[1] Rom 8:28-30 are transitional verses. They belong both to the conclusion of Paul's discussion of Spirit and flesh in 8:5-27 and to the conclusion of the long passage (chs. 5-8) in 8:31-39.

107 vs. 33 "Who will bring any charge against God's elect?"

vs. 35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

vss. 38-39 "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In relation to the present, we read the following:

vs. 31 "If God is for us, who is against us?"[1]

vs. 33 "It is God who justifies; who is to condemn?"

vs. 34 "...Christ...who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?"

vs. 36 "As it is written, 'For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

vs. 37 "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

As Paul's quotation of Ps 44:22, in vs. 36 suggests, one answer to the questions in vss. 31 and 33, is that there are many against 'us' and who condemn. The list of afflictions in vs. 35 and of potential enemies in vss. 38-39 point the same way. Paul here develops the thought he began in vs. 18. How is one to understand the present suffering? His answer here

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[1]There are no verbs to give temporal indications in these statements or in the ones which immediately follow, but the present time is clearly what Paul had in mind.

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108 is different from what he has said before. He does not use the suffering as a witness to God here, as he did in the Corinthian correspondence; there is no real battle in this passage. So much has already happened that present affliction has virtually no importance. While the affliction and threats are mentioned, the overall mood is one of victory already present.

The function of battle imagery in Romans 8:35, 37. The sword in vs. 35 is one of the possible threats. These include both what happens to the believer, what is normal and to be expected, and also, in vss. 38-39, the cosmic background of what happens daily. The sword surely refers to the threat of violent treatment to the believer, in line with 'persecution.' There is no suggestion that the believer fights back, or that anything depends on what he does. It is the same with the 'powers' in vss. 38-39.

Compared with the many future references in the passage, vs. 37 is striking as a description of the present. The tone is very different from I Cor 54, 55, where Paul also speaks of victory. There the victory will follow a battle presently going on and the defeat of enemies. In Rom 8:37, victory is already present.

Both battle images speak about the present; together they preserve the paradoxical understanding of it. Μάχαιρα is a present and continuing threat, one among many. Ὑπερνικάω is present victory. Neither is the consequence of what the believer does. He suffers from the sword; he is given victory by God.

The presence of these terms tells us that when Paul looks at the present time under the impact of the future in the most positive and affirmative way (he is not full of anxiety about opponents, disobedient churches,

109 the possibility that his work might be in vain), the notion of battle is still in his mind. He began ch. 5 by saying that believers have peace with God and access to grace; he ends it by saying that they are superconquerors.

Romans 13:12

> Let us then cast off the works of darkness and
> put on the weapons of light.

Literary context and Paul's purposes. The immediate context of Rom 13:12 is the passage Rom 13:11-14; the wider setting is 12:1-15:13. The latter is the parenetic section of this epistle, in which one finds Paul's famous 'therefore-ethic' most clearly set forth. It begins and ends in a fashion which shows its context to be that of chs. 5-8, where Paul describes life in the present: It is possible and necessary not to be conformed to this age and to be transformed (12:2), because the believer now has peace with God and access to grace (5:1). It closes, as in 8:31-39, with an allusion to a future end of the ambiguous present time: in 8:31-39, Paul speaks of the assured conviction that none of the potential threats operative in the present will finally separate believers from the love of God; in 15:13 Paul speaks of hope.

Romans 12:1-15:13 may be outlined as follows:

12:1-2 General Introduction to the whole passage

12:3-13:14 Instruction to the whole church

12;3 Introduction[1]

12:4-13:10 Exhortation

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[1]See Käsemann's article, "Worship in Everyday Life: A note on Romans 12," in New Testament Questions of Today, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, pp. 188-195, for a discussion of this verse as the heading for the parenesis.

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110 13:11-14 Conclusion

14:1-15:12 Instruction to Jewish and Gentile Church Members[1]

15:13 Conclusion of parenetic section.

Rom 13:11-14, then, closes the section of instruction to the whole church. Paul's purpose is to set this instruction clearly in the context of the impinging Day of the Lord, the parousia of Christ. This is shown by the verses themselves: First, the pattern of instruction in the whole parenetic passage is: imperative, followed by the warrant for the imperative, then other imperatives.[2] The verses under consideration follow this pattern; they are then part of the instruction. The warrant is the nearness of the Day.[3] However, second, the positive injunctions ('wake,'[4] 'put on the weapons of light,' 'let us walk becomingly as in the day,' and 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ') are quite general. This suggests that the specific content of these imperatives is the material found in 12:4-13:10. Third, the καὶ τοῦτο, with which vs. 11 opens, says in

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[1]Paul discusses the questions of diet and the observation of days in this section, under the rubric of the 'weaker' and 'stronger' brothers. It recalls, of course, Paul's similar treatment of meat sacrificed to idols in I Cor 8:7-13. That the issue here is Jewish versus Gentile practice is strongly suggested by 15:8. Cf. also Gal 4:11.

[2]The warrant is almost invariably introduced by γάρ; the second imperative is often introduced by οὖν (13:10b; 13:12b), ἄρα οὖν (14:12, 19) or a similar expression. The one exception to the overall pattern is the passage, 12:9-18, a long series of imperatives with no connecting words at all.

[3]This fact has importance for the interpretation of 13:1-7, as many critics have noted. This passage will be discussed in the following chapter.

[4]I take the verb 'wake' to be imperative in its intention although it is not in mood.

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111 effect, 'in addition to the other warrants given, the hour in which we live is a warrant."[1]

The impact of the coming Day is similar to that in I Th 5:1-11 and I Cor 7:26-31. There are other ethical warrants, in Rom 12:3-15:12, as well as elsewhere in Paul's writings. These verses, 11-14, show that Paul wants the coming Day as warrant here. Why is this the case? It is not, like I Th 5:1-11, in order to offer comfort and assurance to people undergoing persecution; it is not, like I Cor 7:26-31, in order to counsel a policy of 'sitting loose' to normal human institutions, which are about to go out of existence. (Rather, the reverse: Rom 13:1-7!) How does the nearness of the Day qualify ethical instruction concretely in this passage? In what sense is the Day a warrant for Paul's exhortation?

The answer, I think, is that Paul wants to remind his readers that they live ('walk') and make ethical choices against the background of two opposing spheres of power in the present. This means that they act in a highly ambiguous and dangerous situation. They face at every moment, and repeatedly, two options.

The evidence for this contention is as follows:

First, we know from I Th 5:1-11 that thought about the nearness of the Day of the Lord brought to Paul's mind a set of images by which he spoke of two spheres. These images (Day/night, light/darkness, wake (watch)/

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[1]The grammarians (Turner, p. 335, BDF, para. 442 (2)) call this phrase 'epexegetical,' and cite I Cor 2:6, 8. But these latter two texts are not like Rom 13:11. The question here is: to what is καὶ τοῦτο epexegetical? The answer is, I think, that the phrase is epexegetical to the whole of chs. 12-13. Or, to say it in ordinary language: Paul speaks of the basis of his exhortation in the paragraph which begins, "Besides this...." See Gal 6:8, one of the few references to future eschatology in the epistle, for a similar literary structure.

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sleep, be sober/get drunk[1]) aided Paul in describing two kinds of people. He then says, in effect, "Live according to your kind." Those who live according to the Day will not be caught off guard when it comes. In addition, the 'sons of the day' have protective armor available to them in the present.

Second, Paul has perhaps used these terms in preaching to unbelievers. He has certainly spoken of the turn of the ages (in some sense) in the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the expectation of Christ's parousia. Both the call to wake and the prohibitions against the vices listed in vs. 13 would have been, in the context of preaching to unbelievers, part of the call to move from one sphere of power to another, namely, the one Paul tells them about and offers to them.[2]

However, Paul knows that the issue is never a simple shift from one sphere to the other. It is the ambiguity of the believer's situation in relation to both spheres which he has been, throughout chs. 5-8, struggling to bring to expression.[3] Third, then, in vss. 11-14, Paul deals with this

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[1]All of these notions are present in Rom 13:11-14 with the exception of the verb 'to be sober.'

[2]The command to wake and the first four of the vices have a distinct Gnostic ring. Sleep and drunkenness are frequent metaphors for unenlightened men, in Poimandres 27 for example. That Paul makes use of Gnostic motifs and vocabulary comes as no surprise. The difference between his thought and the other has to do primarily, I think, with Paul's sensitivity to the ambiguity and complexity of the shift from one sphere to another, and consequently the subtlety of ethical decisions. For example, one does not find Gnostics inveighing against jealousy and quarrelling.

[3]The ambiguity is difficult to express in any language. A friend of mine who is a member of the Indian Orthodox Church once tried to express it by saying, "The line between the Church and the world runs through me."

113 ambiguity by relating the two spheres temporally. "The night is far gone, the Day is at hand." In the present, the believer is under the impact of both. This explains the use of 'wake' and the prohibitions. The Christian does not once and for all shift from the sphere of sin and the flesh; he does it over and over.[1] But these two spheres are not equivalents, not of equal power. Paul does not want to say that the sphere of God is the more powerful in the present. This would be to underestimate the dangers represented by the power of sin. What he says is that God's sphere has a future; the sphere of sin does not. This is what he means by saying that "salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed."

The nearness of the Day is a warrant for Paul's ethical instruction in the sense that the one who follows his injunctions chooses the sphere which offers a future. The other sphere is on the way out, it is 'far gone.'

The function of battle imagery in Rom 13:12. The reference to the 'weapons of light' in 13:12 would have reminded Paul's readers of 6:13, where he spoke of the members of the body as weapons in the service either of unrighteousness or righteousness. The readers already know that Paul understands them to be soldiers and calls them to fight on the side of God against sin. The soldier's pay on God's side leads to life; on the side of sin to death (Rom 6:23). In this passage, the same opposition is described in terms of which side has a future. The weapons of light belong to the

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[1]The present tenses of the verbs are thus iterative. Cf. Gal 3:17, where Paul speaks of putting on Christ at baptism. In Rom 13:14, one must do it repeatedly.

Paul uses ἐνδύω in I Cor 15:53, 54; II Cor 5:3. These texts speak about the change which is to occur at the parousia (and/or death).

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114 Day; Christians therefore have available to them the power of the future in the present. These verses might have reminded them of 8:37. Believers are superconquerors now, in the midst of battle, because they have the weapons of the future with which to fight.

The modern reader, with Paul's other epistles at his disposal, may trace the various motifs which come together in Rom 13:11-14. We can see, for example, that there are two strands woven together in relation to Paul's use of ἐνδύω in vss. 12 and 14. The first comes from I Th 5:8, where Paul quotes Is 59:17: "putting on the breastplate...and helmet...." In this connection, protective armor has become, in Rom 13:12, weapons. That there is a direct connection between these two texts is suggested by the fact that the soldier literally does dress himself in breastplate and helmet; he does not <u>don</u> weapons.

The second strand in relation to ἐνδυω is recorded in Gal 3:17, where Paul speaks of 'putting on Christ.' In the discussion of I Th 5, I suggested that in some Christian circles, Christ appears to have taken the place of the Prince of Light. In Gal, the expression has to do with baptism, that is, to a once-for-all event in the Christian's life, his entry into the church, the sphere of Christ. In the verses under consideration, it is clear that to put on the weapons of light is to serve in the army led by Christ. But more than this, it is to put on weapons and to put on Christ over and over again. The decision to fight on God's side must be made repeatedly. This is because Paul is not talking about permanently defined sides in a battle. On the contrary, one must be careful that he has not switched allegiances.

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115 In relation to Paul's use of ὅπλα in II Cor 6:7 and 10:4, I suggested that their association with the power of God indicated that Paul used 'weapons' to counter a charge against his weakness and unimpressiveness. That is, Paul maintained his argument that the weakness of the Christian makes manifest the power of God, against those who believed that the wisdom and splendor of the Christian did this. But he also claimed that the power of God available to the weak believer equips him to do battle on behalf of God. This argument is absent in Romans; the issue of power is dealt with in quite a different way. Battle imagery pictures the person as victim, captive, prior to the turn of the ages in Christ (7:23). After the shift, he is an actor, a warrior in a battle where the power of sin will meet its match. The suffering of the Christian is still a factor of life in the present (8:35, 38-39), but it is not in itself a sign of the presence of God. It is not a weapon. The weapons have to do with righteousness, with the opposite of reveling, drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling and jealousy. In the epistle where Paul's primary aim is to answer Jewish objections to his gospel, to show how his faith deals decisively with sin, and thereby with the Law, battle imagery serves Paul by helping him to say, "Now that grace has entered the fray, it is possible to wage war against sin with some hope of winning. When men have access to the sphere of grace, when righteousness is reckoned to them (4:24), that righteousness is not only the opposite of sinning; it is also the source of the weapons by which the power of sin is being vanquished. This is so much the case that, while the resolution of the battle is still in the future, we are now, already, superconquerors."

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Battle Imagery in Philippians 2:25; Philemon 2

> I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need....
>
> To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house....

Two men are named by Paul as 'fellow soldiers' (συστρατιώτης). They are Epaphroditus, mentioned in Phil 2:25 and 4:18, and Archippus, one of the recipients of the letter to Philemon (Phlm 2). Paul often speaks of 'fellow workers' (συνεργός), twice of 'fellow prisoners' (συναιχμάλωτος).[1] The designation 'fellow soldier' may be the virtual equivalent of 'fellow worker,' since Epaphroditus is called both, in Phil 2:25, and Philemon is called 'fellow worker' in the same verse which calls Archippus 'fellow soldier.'[2]

We know very little of Archippus, except that the church met in his house.[3] Someone by the same name is mentioned in Col 4:17. Those who receive the epistle are instructed to tell him to complete (or fulfill) his ministry (διακονία). Even if Paul wrote Col, and this man is

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[1] Rom 16:7; Phlm 23. In Phlm 23, four 'fellow workers' are also mentioned. The 'fellow prisoners' were men who were imprisoned with Paul. The designation has no metaphorical significance.

[2] Epaphroditus is also called 'brother'; Apphia, in Phlm 2, is called 'sister.' She is the third recipient of the letter. Both verses under consideration include the same three designations. This is an indication, I think, that when Paul wrote these letters, he thought of all Christians as soldiers.

[3] Presumably Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus were members of the same family living in the same house. The body of the epistle is directed to Philemon, as head of the family and owner of Onesimus, as is shown by the consistent use of the third person singular.

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117 the Archippus named in Phlm, the text does not help us to interpret the precise meaning of 'fellow soldier,' since Paul's use of διακονία is too general to indicate a particular function or mandate.

We know more about Epaphroditus from Phil 2:25-30. For our purposes, the most important element is the way in which he serves as the concrete link between Paul and the Philippians. Of his illness, Paul says, "...for he nearly died for the work of Christ...." This work was to deliver the gift of the Philippians to Paul (4:18; 2:30: "...risking his life to complete your service to me"). Paul is eager for him to return to Philippi, so the church members there may rejoice in his recovery, and so that "...I may be less anxious" (vs. 28). Epaphroditus is Paul's brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, and the Philippians' messenger[1] and minister to Paul's need. As such, he is dear to Paul; the mercy of God which cured him was also mercy on Paul, in the sense that his death would have caused Paul great sorrow, vs. 27.

The heavy stress on mutuality, which we noted in II Cor 10-13, is present in the comments about Epaphroditus. It is his service to Paul on behalf of the Philippian church which makes him Paul's fellow worker and fellow soldier.[2]

Vs. 29b is a little odd. Why would Paul feel he has to admonish the church to honor men like Epaphroditus? The Philippians apparently were very concerned about him; they had, after all, entrusted him with

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[1]The word ἀπόστολος is correctly translated 'messenger' in the RSV. It is similar to the use of the same word in II Cor 8:23.

[2]Of course, both Paul and the Philippians knew more about Epaphroditus than we do. We can conclude, however, from his severe illness, that he did not do much work for Paul aside from delivering the gift.

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118 their gift to Paul. There is no hint (as, for example, in I Th 5:13; I Cor 16:15) that he was an embattled leader in the church. The reason appears in the ὅτι at the beginning of vs. 30: he is to be honored because he almost died. That is, he paid a very high price to get his job done.[1] It may be that Paul calls Epaphroditus his 'fellow soldier' because he has suffered severely. If so, this links Phil 2:25 with such texts already discussed as I Cor 15:31 ("I die daily") and II Cor 7:5 ("fighting without and fear within"). The suffering, even illness, which overtakes the believer in the course of carrying out his service to Christ is, for Paul, the consequence of life on the battlefield.

Conclusion

A study of Paul's use of battle imagery shows that it is occasional but not fortuitous. That is, it is occasional in the sense that it occurs only because some element in his particular relationship with a given church calls it forth, not because Paul has a theory or ideology of battle which he wants to sell, independent of the issues at hand. Rather, it is an appropriate expression in each case of his concerns at the moment and contributes directly to whatever point he is making. These points are diverse; battle imagery does not make one point, in Paul, but many. On the other hand, the warfare metaphor is not fortuitous in the sense that some other imagery (such as the more general imagery of opposition) would have done as well.

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[1] In this, he is similar to Paul's fellow prisoners, mentioned in Rom 16:7.

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119 Military terminology comes to Paul's mind first of all and repeatedly in the context of thought about the imminent parousia of Christ; that is, when he thinks of the present time under the impact of the Day. This is clear from his use of it in I Th 5:8; I Cor 15:23-26, 52-55; Rom 8:35, 37; 13:12. It is less clear in II Cor 6:7; 7:5; 10:3-6, but Paul could reasonably assume that I Cor 15 would be remembered by his Corinthian readers (since apparently they did pay attention to what he wrote, II Cor 10:9-10).

In each case, Paul has in mind two opposing spheres of power in the present time. However, this fact tells us very little of importance. Battle inevitably suggests opposing forces; almost everything Paul says about anything has to do with the two-spheres notion; that notion is prominent where Paul does not use battle terminology (for example, in Galatians).

When I began this study, several obvious possibilities seemed promising. Since Paul does not regard people as his enemies, is it the case that the opponents in battle are consistently the 'principalities and powers'? Given the emphasis in the Corinthian correspondence on the Christian's daily dying as the manifestation of God's power, does battle imagery express Paul's conviction that his suffering is a consequence of his place on the battlefield, that a soldier, fighting at the point where the two spheres collide and make war, risks being a casualty? Or, more simply, since Paul's letters always reflect his involvement in the hurly-burly, helter-skelter business of daily living, rather than the peace and calm of relatively detached theological reflection, does battle imagery appear where he is personally most embattled? A positive answer to the first and/or second of these questions might have furnished material for working out a coherent

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120 world-view. One could then attribute to Paul a consistent, carefully worked out theory that the present is the Messianic age in which the final battle is being fought between God's agents and his enemies, along the lines foreseen by the Qumran community and the author of Rev, for example.

Or, contrary to this possibility, a positive answer to the third question might have shown that battle imagery in Paul represents no special set of presuppositions about reality, but reflects only his own immediate battles with different sets of opponents.

None of this will do, however. In relation to the embattled Paul, it is a very curious fact that, while his most explicit battle imagery is found in II Cor 10:3-6, where he is obviously fighting very hard, there is no warfare metaphor at all in Galatians, where he fights equally hard. In terms of the 'principalities and powers,' the evidence is very ambiguous. They are the enemies (or some of them) in I Th, I Cor 15:24f; II Cor 10:5; Rom 8:38-39, but they do not in any of these passages constitute the threat about which Paul is most concerned. There are no references to them in II Cor 6:3-10; 7:5ff; or in relation to the mention of Paul's two 'fellow-soldiers" (Phil 2:25; Phlm 2). In Romans 6-7, the powers are sin and death. Moreover, Paul refers often to the 'principalities and powers' where there is no battle terminology.[1]

The language of suffering and affliction is more closely tied to battle imagery, in I Th, I Cor 15; II Cor 7:5; Rom 8:35, 38-39, and Phil 2:25-30. It is less so in II Cor 6:7; very little in II Cor 6:7; 10:3-6; Rom 6:13, 23; 7:23; 13:12. Again, there are important passages in which

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[1]The next chapter will include a more detailed study of these texts.

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121 Paul speaks of his affliction without any mention of battle, as for example, in I Cor 4:8-13; II Cor 4:7-12; 11:23-29.

By way of positive results of the study, two seem to me worthy of comment beyond what has been said in relation to each of the relevant texts. The first has to do with what appears to be something like development in Paul's use of battle imagery. There is a line which divides I Th, Gal, and I Cor from the later epistles: II Cor, Rom, Phil, Phlm. In the earlier letters, the link between military motifs and the parousia is clearer than in the later writings. (Since Paul has occasion in Galatians to speak very little about the parousia, this may account in part for the lack of any warfare terms.) More important, it is not clear that Christians fight, that their calling as believers is the call to be soldiers. In I Th 5:8, readers are told that they have protective armor in a dangerous situation. Paul says nothing even about the present activity of Christ in this epistle. In I Cor, Christ fights against the enemies in the present, but it is not clear that Christians do. In both of these letters, affliction is the inevitable consequence of faith. In both, faith puts the believers on the right side of the struggle in progress. The notion that the suffering of Christians contributes to the defeat of the enemy, death, is strongly suggested in I Cor and II Cor 1-7. In this sense, they are participants in the battle Christ fights. But as such, they are victims of the war, extremely vulnerable, well-nigh defenseless in an exposed and dangerous situation. If Paul, in I Cor 9:7, understands himself to be a soldier, he speaks of his military service only in terms of denial and dying.

In the later epistles, it is clear that Christians fight. The protective armor of I Th 5:8 has become 'weapons' for offensive as well as

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122 defensive warfare (II Cor 6:7). In a series of remarkable statements for the apostle who understood his witness as weakness, Paul speaks in II Cor 10:3-6 of what he and his colleagues do in the battle. They destroy exalted things; they take thoughts captive to Christ; they condemn disobedience. These actions sound like what Paul elsewhere says only of God or Christ. The soldier who, in I Cor 9:7, refused the wages due to him, in II Cor 11:8, takes those wages as war booty (from other churches) in order to do his military service. In Rom, Paul described himself as victim of enemy forces only when he speaks of the time prior to his conversion (7:23). In the present, he calls his readers to use the weapons of righteousness (6:13) and of light (13:12) at their disposal. He speaks of fellow workers as 'fellow soldiers,' in Phil and Phlm.

This shift, or development, is to be accounted for in some obvious ways. Paul's ministry was full of conflicts. What originally suggested battle imagery to him, the parousia, does not fade, as Rom 13:11-14 clearly shows. But more and more, a life of battle is described as such without any explicit connection with the Day of the Lord. Moreover, Paul learned the hard way that he had to be careful how he expressed his permanent conviction that the weakness and suffering of the believer was a weapon in Christ's war against men's and God's enemies. When his opponents in Corinth used that conviction to undermine Paul's gospel, he speaks not only of dying but of fighting. The believer who has been freed from the dominion of sin and death (Rom 5-6) is the one who is now free, not to be exalted and glorious, but free to fight.

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123 The second result of the study which requires comment has to do with a persistent theme of ambiguity which runs through the texts examined. What, if anything, links the diverse uses of battle imagery in Paul's writings? It seems to me that the answer is that warfare imagery functions in each case (except one, naturally!) to indicate the complexity of life at the turn of the ages, in a world where two spheres of power compete with each other for dominion over people. It helps to preserve some fuzzy lines, against people who want more clarity than life will give them, according to Paul.

In I Th 5:1-11 (and in all of the Pauline epistles), one kind of ambiguity is the result of Paul's refusal to make other people the enemy. He does not see as part of the Christian's task the destruction of God's human enemies. While he draws a picture of two choices and two sets of people according to the decisions made, he does not call the 'sons of the Day' to war against the others. Moreover, the dangers which believers face come from both without and within the church. More important, that which is in peril and the armor which protects are the same: faith, love, and hope. There is not something else which defends what is exposed to enemy attack; what is vulnerable is the defense.

The most striking ambiguity in Paul's thought, his argument about weakness and power, is akin to the notion that what is exposed is what protects. In I Cor 15 and the early chapters of II Cor (the texts discussed in the section on II Cor 7:5) Paul speaks of death both as the final enemy and as the daily experience of the believer by which Christ is defeating that enemy. The Christian is exposed again and again to the worst that the enemy, death, can do to him. ("I die daily," I Cor 15:31;

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124 "...for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death...." II Cor 1:8-9.) In this situation, his only defense is reliance on God (II Cor 1:9). But what does that mean, concretely? It means that in fact he does not die, but lives (II Cor 4:10-12; 6:6-9). This very subtle argument makes use of other ambiguities: the two ages both exist in the present; two spheres of power exist, neither of which reigns completely; something has happened to those who bore the image of the man of dust, but they do not yet bear the image of the man of heaven. These antitheses do not in themselves express Paul's paradox; simply to juxtapose life and death, present and future, does not make suffering as dying daily intelligible and purposeful. It is the battle in which death is both enemy and weapon against the enemy which does this.

In II Cor 6:7 and 10:3-6 Paul uses the notion of warfare to speak about the ambiguity of the present in a different way. The clarity which is too clear and which Paul refuses is here the distinction between honor and dishonor, glory and weakness, Spirit and flesh. No one lives in a simple way on one side or the other of these distinctions. What can be said of the believer who witnesses by dying is that he also fights. He is not powerless, defenseless; he has the weapons of God's power at his disposal. The present is not glory-time, but it is not only dying-time. It is also battle-time.

The ambiguity in Rom 7:23 is that of the divided self under the dominion of sin; the ambiguity of good intentions and powerlessness to fulfill them. The description of this situation ("I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate," Rom 7:16) comes to a dramatic climax in

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125 the picture of the self at war with and defeated by the alien power of sin within the person.[1]

The ambiguity expressed in Rom 6:13, 8:35, 37; 13:12 has to do with the two spheres of power competing for dominion in the present and with the fact that no one belongs in a simple way to the sphere of God's grace. In 6:13, one can yield one's members as weapons of righteousness or unrighteousness, but either way he is involved in fighting. This is similar to II Cor 6:7 and 10:3-6: if he chooses, a man can be free of the dominion of sin; but he is not free to rest, only to fight. In 8:35, 37, and 13:12, the ambiguity is set in temporal terms. In the first texts, it has to do with present victory over still undefeated enemies; in the second, with weapons of the future available in the present.

The one exception to the pattern is Rom 6:23. There battle imagery does not serve to express ambiguity. Rather, it does the opposite. At the conclusion of Paul's discussion of opposing spheres of power, he distinguishes sharply between them.

The most prominent characteristic of Paul's literary style is exactly this use of antithetical parallelism. It appears everywhere and obviously is typical of his whole mentality. It is a curious feature in a man with his profound sensitivity to the ambiguities and complexities of life, for it is precisely a device for clarification and the resolution of ambiguities. This is Paul's objective in Galatians and the basic reason,

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[1]Dorothy Martyn has given me a striking example of what Paul talks about in this text. She speaks about her work as a therapist for disturbed children as making herself the child's ally against the destructive forces which grip him: "Johnny, are those hands giving you trouble? Here, I will hold them for you."

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126 I think, that there is no battle imagery in that epistle. Paul struggles to draw a clear line between a time of slavery in the past, to which the Law and circumcision belong, and the present time in which slavery has ended and freedom has come, making the Law obsolete. He speaks against a position which does not see the distinction clearly, but rather understands the present essentially as a continuation of the past. The language of opposition so prominent in Galatians serves Paul's purpose of setting off the two times as sharply as possible.

The language of battle on the other hand brings two opposing elements together and the situation becomes confused. That is how Paul sees life: People live in a situation where the two options are always getting mixed up so that they must decide over and over which is which and take their stand with one against the other. There <u>are</u> two options and basically only two; that is what Paul's antithetical parallelism expresses. Because life is always obscuring the fact, people must be careful, alert to which choice they are making; that is what battle imagery helps Paul to say.[1]

Why, then, is this metaphor not more prominent in Paul's writing? I do not mean to imply with what is said above that Paul deliberately sat down and asked himself how to express ambiguity and decided to use battle imagery to do it. If he had done that, it might be more prominent; it would certainly have been used in a more consistent way. Rather, it was the ambiguity of life at the turn of the ages which brought the notion of the Messianic Age and the final battle to his mind. He then used the

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[1]Battle imagery is not the only way Paul speaks about ambiguity. I Cor 7:26-31 comes to mind, where Paul counsels his readers to deal with the world as if they were not dealing with it.

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127 metaphor of warfare occasionally to insist that things are not at all simple in the present. The imagery is not more prominent because in and of itself it might also move in the direction of more clarity than Paul wants. While it is true that battle brings two opposing forces together, it ought also to define sharply those on each side. (Look what it did in the Qumran community!) Paul does not want Christians to start shooting at non-Christians. It remains occasional imagery for Paul because the alternative would be to make it into an ideology.

It is not, however, fortuitous. Given the juncture of the ages and the as yet unresolved tensions, given the experience of liberation and the constant threat of slavery, given what kept happening to Paul by way of affliction as he pursued his ministry, given the availability to him of the Messianic-Kingdom notion in a world looking for a way to find peace and exaltation now, given the persistent efforts of his opponents to describe life in oversimplified terms -- given all of this, it was well-nigh inevitable that one of the ways Paul would struggle to stick to the realities he experienced would be to speak about the present as a time of battle.

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CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES

Introduction

There are several directions in which an expansion of the study of Paul's notions with regard to battle might move. One further approach would be to examine the wider vocabulary of opposition, with special attention to his use of antithetical parallelism. Another would be a study of his pondering of suffering and its meaning. A third possibility might be the tracing of other metaphors which develop from Paul's eschatology, as the metaphor of warfare does.

I have chosen to discuss the principalities and powers not because these are consistently the enemy in Paul's use of battle imagery (the previous chapter has shown that this is not so), but because they promise to be of help in understanding Paul's ideas about power and its expression in the present time.

The method used in what follows is similar to that employed in the previous chapter. The various designations for the powers will be examined in their own literary contexts. I will ask how these entities function, what they do, what power they have, and how it is used. Some attention will be given to Paul's attitude towards them: does he regard one or the other with respect or contempt? Finally, I will ask what future they have.

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The Data

The general designation, 'principalities and powers,' indicates a wide variety of expressions used by Paul. The terms discussed are listed below according to the frequency of Paul's employment of them.

Angel (ἄγγελος)

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary...

3:19 ...and it (the Law) was ordained by angels through an intermediary.

4:14 ...but (you) received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

I Cor 4:9 ...a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.

6:3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels?

11:10 That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels.

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels...

II Cor 11:14 ...for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

12:7 a thorn was given me in the flesh, an angel of Satan.

Rom 8:38 ...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation....

Satan (σατανᾶς)

I Th 2:18 ...we wanted to come to you...but Satan hindered us.

I Cor 5:5 ...you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

7:5 ...lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.

II Cor 2:11 ...to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us...

11:14 ...for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

12:7 ...a thorn...an angel of Satan.

130 Rom 16:20 ...then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Idol (εἴδωλον)

I Th 1:9 ...how you turned to God from idols, to serve a true and living God...

I Cor 8:4 "an idol has no real existence"

8:7 but some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols...

10:19 What do I imply then? That...an idol is anything?

12:2 You know that when you were heathen, you were lead astray to dumb idols...

Rom 2:22 You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Ruler (ἀρχή)

I Cor 15:24 ...after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

Rom 8:38 ...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities...

Ruler (ἄρχων)

I Cor 2:6,8 ...it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age...

None of the rulers of this age understood...

Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Authority (ἐξουσία)

I Cor 15:24 ...after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

Rom 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.

Power (δύναμις)

I Cor 15:24 ...after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

Rom 8:38 ...nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers...

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Height (ὕψωμα)

II Cor 10:5 We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle...

Rom 8:39 ...nor height, nor depth...

There are many designations used by Paul only once or in only one passage. These are listed below according to the order in which the epistles are treated in this study.

I Th 3:5 ...for fear that somehow the tempter (ὁ πειράζων) has tempted you...

4:16 ...with the archangel's (ἀρχάγγελος) call...

Gal 4:3 ...we were slaves to the world elements (στοιχεῖα).

4:8 ...you were in bondate to beings that by nature are no gods... (φύσεις μὴ οὔσιν θεοί)

4:9 ...how can you turn back again to the weak and poor elements... (στοιχεῖα)

I Cor 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world... (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου)

8:5 For although there may be so-called gods (λεγόμενοι θεοί) in heaven or on earth -- as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" (θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί)...

10:10 ...nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer (ὁ ὀλεθρευτής).

10:20,21 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons (δαιμονία) and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

II Cor 4:4 ...the god of this age (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) has blinded the minds of the unbelievers...

Phil 2:10-11 ...that at the time of Jesus every knee (γόνυ) should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue (γλῶσσα) confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

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Background

It is obvious that Paul, like his contemporaries, understood himself to live in a universe peopled with spiritual or angelic/demonic beings. I do not propose here to set out the material in a comprehensive way or to review the work of scholars on the relevant sources. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Paul's stance toward such 'lords and gods' (I Cor 8:5), to ask what he thought of them and how referring to them in the epistles helped him to make the point at issue. In this section, I want to suggest briefly what he had at his disposal, provided by his time and culture, by way of imagery and notions of supernatural powers.

The sources exhibit an enormous variety of such beings and their functions. Many of the designations are virtually interchangeable.[1] A single figure goes by a variety of names.[2] Some entities stand on the side of God in certain sources, against Him in others.[3] Some authors seem to name various powers in a poetic way, in order to pile up images of the 'hosts of heaven.'[4] Sometimes writers delineate the functions of various heavenly beings.[5]

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[1]For example, angels and demons, rulers and authorities.

[2]For example, in the War Scroll and the other documents from Qumran, the angelic enemy is called both Beliar and the Prince of Darkness.

[3]Satan is the accuser of men before God, a function he has by God's appointment, in the Rabbis. Cf. Midrash on Exodus, 12:29 and Midrash on Leviticus 16:3, cited by Caird, Principalities and Powers. He does not abuse his office. He is, on the other hand, often the source of temptation to lead men astray and of efforts to disrupt the plan of salvation in Jewish sources. Cf. Foerster, on διάβολος, TDNT, Vol. II, p. 76f, for many sources.

[4]Cf. I En 61:10; II En 20:1.

[5]Cf. Philo on the function of angels to govern and punish men, Legatio ad Gajum 1; De Cherubim 9; De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini 15, cited by Caird, and De Plantatione, N 14, quoted by Kittel, TDNT, Vol. I, p. 76.

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133 We are dealing in the first century with a mood in relation to these powers, not with clearly defined ideas, much less with authoritative doctrine. There are no dependable formulas for the association of various beings with one another.[1] While it is possible to trace dualism back to Persia, sun worship to Egypt, Satan to pre-exilic Israel,[2] these data may obscure the fact that in Paul's time these notions had long ago (at least a century before) met, collided, merged, and blurred into one another.

The mood which undergirded the continued mention of the powers came out of the widespread experience of powerlessness, of life at the mercy of forces external to men and uncontrolled by them.[3] What Gilbert Murray has called (patronizingly, I always think) the 'failure of nerve' was the inability of men to impose coherence and rationality on their world, and the consequent loss of firm ground to stand on, of a safe place in which to live.

People tried in different ways to impose rationality, or at least control, on their world. The Stoics insisted that life was not ruled by blind Chance, but by intelligent and benign (albeit deterministic) Fate. Thus, they laid claim to a trustworthy universe, but paid a large price for

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[1] II En 20:1, often cited as a parellel to Col 1:16 (εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι), includes the entities mentioned in the Col text, but not in the order given in the latter; nor is the Enoch text limited to these four. It reads: "...and fiery troops of great archangels, incorporeal forces, and dominions, orders and governments, cherubim and seraphim, thrones and many-eyed ones, nine regiments, the Ionat stations of light...," as translated by Forbes and Charles in Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, Vol II, p. 441.

[2] Cf. Von Rad, on The OT View of Satan, TDNT, Vol. II, p. 74f, where he speaks about Persian influences on the development of notions about Satan, but concludes: "The OT prosecutor and adversary is a figure for whom there are no analogies."

[3] See the discussion of Grundmann on δύναμις, TDNT, Vol II, p. 288

134 it in terms of freedom.[1] The adherents of the mystery religions attempted to tap the sources of power by initiation into and observation of the cults of the gods, thus providing a feeling of safety and connectedness for themselves at the price of extreme sectarianism.[2] Jewish apocalyptic writers offered a temporal vision which promised release from inimical powers in the near future, at the price of impotence in the face of present darkness.[3] These and other views co-existed and competed with one another in the first century. None of them had sufficient power to win the widespread allegiance which might have provided a sense of coherence for the whole society.

The multiplicity of angels and demons did not mean that the whole Graeco-Roman world cowered in fear before them. There was another spirit present also. Stoic teachers, Rabbis and others understood that the resources for free and responsible living were available to people, and they called men to act on that assumption. The community of Qumran had the Kittim firmly linked with the Prince of Darkness and his angels, but the

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[1]Cf. Epictetus, Of Freedom, Book LV, Ch. 1. One wonders how such an argument had any power to convince. One is free, according to Epictetus, in relation to what one controls. What one does not control (practically everything, it seems to me) is of no importance. What one controls is one's own will, desire, assent. "Who can hinder me any longer against my own views, or put compulsion upon me? That is no more possible in my case than it would be with Zeus." Loeb Edition, Vol. II, p. 275. Long before modern psychiatry taught us that this is not so, the Paul who wrote Rom 7 knew it.

[2]Cf., for example, the Initiation of Lucius into the cult of Isis, from Apuleius' Metamorphoses XI, 22-25, quoted in F. C. Grant, Hellenistic Religions, pp. 140-144.

[3]Of many examples, the War Scroll and Revelation.

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135 enemy on which the War Scroll focused was the human one. Doubtless for many ordinary people, the fish were brought in from the boats, the tradesmen sold their wares, the clothes were washed, and the meals cooked without constant propitiation of one or another god.

Paul's world presented him with a large variety of angelic/demonic figures and attitudes about them. In order to be specific with regard to his own views of them, we turn to the individual texts in which he uses them.

Paul and the Powers

In the discussion of the figures and forces which stand against God and are inimical to the believer, we begin with Satan, as the least ambiguous of the enemies. Of all the 'powers,' only the angels are mentioned more often. The other terms under consideration are grouped together for discussion according to the associations found in Paul's writings. That is, the first group consists of angels (ἄγγελοι), ruler (ἀρχή and ἄρχων), power (δύναμις), authority (ἐξουσία), and height (ὕψωμα). All of these are related to others in this list in various combinations. In some cases, designations used only once by Paul are clearly to be associated with one or another of these categories, as, for example, the archangel of I Th 4:16 is related to the texts which speak of angels.

A second group of terms consists of idols, demons, and world elements (στοιχεῖα). Paul speaks of idols in various contexts, but never in relation to any of the terms listed in the first group. He speaks of demons and world elements only once each (I Cor 10:20-21 and Gal 4:3, 9, respectively), and in both cases in association with idols or an equivalent.

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136 Again, a designation used only once by Paul, namely, 'beings that by nature are no gods' (Gal 4:8), is clearly associated with this group.

Finally, other references to 'gods' and parallel terms will be discussed. These are found in I Cor 2:12 and Phil 2:10-11.

Satan (σατανᾶς)

I include the Tempter (I Th 3:5) and the 'god of this age' (II Cor 4:4) in the discussion of Satan. These texts together with those which name him tell us some predictable things about Satan. He is God's enemy in the present (II Cor 4:4); he (and his followers, II Cor 11:15) will be destroyed in the future (Rom 16:20). He exercises limited but real power in the present (I Th 2:18; I Cor 5:5; II Cor 4:4). His typical ways of operating are temptation and deceit (I Th 3:5; I Cor 7:5; II Cor 2:11; 11:14). He is associated with illness (II Cor 12:7).

These references suggest the notion of two opposing spheres of power in the present. Especially I Cor 5:5 and II Cor 11:13-15 call such an idea to mind. In the first text, Satan does not have power to destroy the man's flesh except that the church delivers him over to Satan. While he can try to tempt and deceive Christians, he exercises power over them only if they allow it. In II Cor 11:13-15, the actors in the sphere opposed to God are named: Satan, disguised as an angel of light, and his followers, deceitful workmen, false apostles, disguised as servants of righteousness.

Paul's use of Satan does not, however, present us with a consistent or thorough-going dualism. There are fuzzy edges to his thinking about Satan. One of these blurred lines has to do with the fact that Satan's activity contributes to God's purposes. This is true of the statement in I Cor 5:5. It is very much the case in relation to Paul's 'thorn.' One

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137 should not, perhaps, even speak about Satan's activity here, since the passive voice ('a thorn was given to me') suggests that the giver may have been God. In any case, Paul regards his 'thorn' both as an angel of Satan[1] and as a means by which God manifests his power in the apostle.

Just prior to Paul's statement that God will soon crush Satan (Rom 16:20), he warns (vss. 17-19) against deceitful human opponents who serve, not Satan, but 'their own belly' (κοιλία). He speaks in a similar way in Phil 3:18-19 ('their god is the belly'). Here there is no clearly stated enslavement to Satan, as in II Cor 11:13-15, but only scorn.

The 'god of this age' who has blinded the minds of the unbelievers (II Cor 4:4) is an ambiguous figure. The argument about veiling/blinding has to do with the notion of 'hardening' (II Cor 3:14; Rom 11:7). The idea that Israel's rejection of the Gospel is part of the divine plan comes to full expression in Rom 9-11. There Paul says that God himself has (temporarily) hardened the Jews. In II Cor 3:14-15, the Law appears to be responsible for the veiling. It is not clear how the 'god of this age' relates to these data. Paul is speaking of unbelievers generally in II Cor 4:4, and not specifically of Jews. It may be that Satan has the power to blind in the sphere of power which he dominates (in 'this age'), but a man can turn to the Lord and have the veil removed (3:16). Satan, then, exercises real but very limited power,

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[1]The issue is not, throughout this study, the question whether the powers are personified or not. Anyone who could call an illness an angel of Satan can personify anything he pleases. It was not part of Paul's world to draw that line as we draw it.

138 Paul's references to Satan seem to me to be infrequent and occasional. While this well-known and widely-used figure appears now and then, he does not occupy center stage as a designation for the chief enemy.

Angels (ἄγγελοι)

Paul, like his contemporaries, thinks of angels, beings which have an intermediate status between God and men, in a variety of ways.

In I Th 4:16 ('archangel'); Gal 1:8; 4:14, and II Cor 11:14, they are servants of God.[1] In I Cor 6:3; II Cor 12:7 and Rom 8:38, they are, at least potentially, enemies of God. At least, in I Cor 6:3, they are to be judged. In II Cor 12:7, although the angel is from Satan, and therefore inimical to Paul, he serves God's purposes. The list of possible obstacles to the love of God in Rom 8:38 includes elements which do not appear to be opposed to God ('life,' ' things present,' 'things to come') as well as threatening elements. In this list, 'angels' are paired with 'rulers' (ἀρχαί), but this does not imply either good or evil beings in itself, since the pairs are not consistent in these terms.

Gal 3:19 speaks of angels either as those who transmitted the Law to Israel or as the source of the Law.[2] In either case, they stand in contrast to God, who gave his promise directly to Abraham. They are not enemies of God but only beings of much less importance.

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[1]The 'angel from heaven' in Gal 1;8 is the equivalent of the 'angel of God' in Gal 4;14. Heaven is always the sphere of God in Pauline usage. The texts are: Rom 1:18; 10:6; I Cor 8:5; 15:47; II Cor 5:1,2; 12:2; Gal 1:8; Phil 3:20; I Th 1:10; 4:16.

[2]The interpretation depends on the precise thrust of διατάσσω with the preposition διά in Gal 3:19. See, for example, Schlier's commentary, ad loc.

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139 I Cor 4:9 and 13:1 may suggest that the combination, 'men and angels,' designates a comprehensive category of all beings (who watch the spectacle of the apostle's humiliation, who have voices). It is like Gal 1:8. The cryptic reference to angels in I Cor 11:10 may imply either beneficent or inimical beings.[1]

To these references should be added the Destroyer (ὁ ὀλεθρευτής) mentioned in I Cor 10:10. Paul has combined elements from the tradition recorded in various places in Exodus and Numbers in vss. 7-9. The Destroyer does not appear in any of these texts. He is mentioned in Exodus 12:23, as the one who killed the first-born of the Egyptians, before the exodus. The cognate verb ὀλοθρεύω is used in the LXX to describe the action of the angel of the Lord in II Sam 24:16; I Chron 21:12. These data make clear that the being to which Paul refers is not a power against God, but rather the instrument of God.

The angels do not do very much in Paul's references to them. They gave or transmitted the Law, punished the rebellious people of God in the past; an archangel will help to wake those who sleep and some angels will be judged in the future. In the present, it is not even clear that Paul's thorn was given him by the angel of Satan. Rather, the passive voice ("a thorn <u>was given</u> me") suggests that God was the giver. This reference is a particularly good example of the highly ambiguous, not to say blurred, notions Paul had of the actions of angelic beings. Typically, they sometimes support, sometimes oppose God's purposes. Their power is strictly

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[1]Hurd, <u>The Origin of I Corinthians</u>, p. 184, fn 4, provides a convenient listing of scholars' opinions about I Cor 11:10. For more recent discussion, see Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," Journal of the AAR, XL (1972), 283-303, and Lilias Morrison, unpublished exegetical project.

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140 limited and derived. Although Paul speaks more often of angels than of any other non-human beings, they are only adjuncts, secondary to the important action taking place.[1]

Ruler (ἀρχή, ἄρχων)

Paul speaks of ἀρχή in I Cor 15:24; Rom 8:38, and Phil 4:15.[2] In I Cor 15:24, the term is associated with ἐξουσία and δύναμις; in Rom 8:38, it is paired with ἄγγελοι, and δύναμεις is part of the list of threats in which it stands.[3] In both places, it stands as something in opposition to God. The 'rulers' have power, but we are not told what they do. They are operative in the present, but they have no future (I Cor 15:24).

It is difficult to be certain whether they are human or angelic powers, or perhaps both. In I Cor 15:24, they might be either or both, but the most probable meaning is non-human powers, since they are analogically related to death, as the last enemy. The evidence of Col and Eph,[4] where they are always associated with ἐξουσίαι, also suggests spiritual powers.

The occurrence in Rom 8:38 is not so clear. There the term seems to refer to human beings. It stands in relation to ἄγγελοι, in a list

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[1]This is true even in I Cor 11:10. Whatever Paul means to imply by this statement, the mention of angels is an afterthought in terms of the structure of his argument.

[2]The term in Phil 4:15 clearly means 'beginning,' and will not be further discussed here.

[3]The form of the three words in I Cor 15:24 is singular, but with the use of πᾶς it is clear that the intent is plural.

[4]Cf. Col 1:16; 2:10; 2:15; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6;12.

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which includes three other pairs of opposites.[1] The most natural meaning in the context would be 'angelic (rulers) and (human) rulers.' The combination of angels and men, in I Cor 4:9; 13:1, as a comprehensive designation for all beings, points in the same direction.

The same ambiguity is present in Paul's use of ἄρχοντες. In I Cor 2:8, it is said that they 'crucified the Lord of glory.' The only other place where Paul says anything of this sort is I Th 2:15, where he says that the Jews 'killed the Lord Jesus.' The Corinthian context, however, strongly indicates that the ἄρχοντες also represent spiritual powers. They are being destroyed (καταργέω, as in I Cor 15:24, of the ἀρχή). The Gnostic overtones here (and elsewhere) in the epistle support this: the ἄρχοντες did not know the secret, hidden wisdom of God and therefore made a mistake (not in seeing the Lord of glory as an enemy, but in misunderstanding his power). In this connection, I Cor 1:28 comes to mind. 'The things that are' may be spiritual powers like the ἄρχοντες. The same verb is used, καταργέω. Paul speaks of power here, namely, the power of the church, composed of those who are low and despised in the world, who are used by God to nullify, bring to naught, the things that are. Καταργέω, used often by Paul with various nuances, never in his writings has a human being as the object of the destruction.

The ἄρχοντες of Rom 13:3 appear to be human rulers. They are called servants of God (διάκονοι), and ministers of God (λειτουργοί.) Paul never uses either of these terms for non-human beings. However, in

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[1]The list also includes δύναμεις without a balancing contrast. This is discussed below.

142 this passage the question is not whether the ἄρχοντες are 'powers' but whether the ἐξουσίαι are.

The archons clearly have power in both passages. Just as clearly, they have no future.[1] They are inimical in I Cor 2:6-8; they are not, in Rom 13:3f.

It may be no accident that the two references in I Cor appear to indicate angelic powers and the two in Rom may denote human rules. The ways Paul uses this language may be dependent on the readers he addresses. Since the terms and others which he uses (ἐξουσίαι, δύναμεις) are difficult to distinguish from each other and may be virtually interchangeable, a full evaluation must await consideration of all of them.

Power (δύναμις)

Of Paul's many uses of this term, it appears to represent something similar to the archons only in I Cor 15:24 and Rom 8:38, two of the texts discussed above. While there is nothing in Paul's use of it in these two places to suggest angelic powers, its association with archons as well as general Hellenistic usage[2] is enough to suggest similarity in this matter. It is the only item in the list of Rom 8:38 which stands without a parallel. Together with the evidence from Col and Eph on the association of ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι, this might indicate that the δύναμεις are for Paul

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[1]This is clear from Rom 13:11-14, which follows the passage under consideration. See my discussion of these verses in the previous chapter of the thesis.

[2]See Grundman's discussion in his article on δυναμις and cognates (TDNT, Vol. II, esp. pp. 286-290) of the development of notions associated with these words.

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143 somewhat different from the 'rulers' and 'authorities.' That is, if Paul uses the latter two as a formula, as the author(s) of Col and Eph, the addition of δύναμις in I Cor 15:24 and its appearance without a parallel in Rom 8:38 may point to its being a more comprehensive designation for superhuman powers. However, Paul does not use ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουσίαι as a formula, as Rom 8:38 shows.

In both texts, it represents an enemy of God; in both it is part of the present but has no future. It might be understood to be less ambiguous than the archons, as it is not said to be a servant of God. In this connection, however, Paul's use of the same term to speak of miracles, or extraordinary events which typically accompanied the founding of his churches,[1] must be mentioned. Whatever the concrete reference is, these events are regarded by Paul as manifestations of God's power. The δύναμεις are, therefore, ambiguous and, insofar as we can tell from Paul's usage, imprecise designations.

Authority (ἐξουσίαι)

In relation to the use of this term in I Cor 15:24, we know only what has already been said of ἀρχή and δύναμις: that these powers, operative in the present, are being destroyed by Christ. We do not have the term used elsewhere by Paul in such a way as to tell us more about his view of it. The fact that the authors of Col, Eph, and I Pet[2] use the term in the plural to speak about spiritual powers is enough to suggest that Paul uses it, in I Cor 15:24, in the same way.

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[1]Cf. Gal 3:5; I Cor 12:10; 12:28; II Cor 12:12; Rom 15:19.

[2]Cf. the texts cited in fn 4, p. 144, above. In I Pet 3:22, the term is used with 'angels' and 'powers.'

144 If the ἐξουσίαι in Rom 13:1 represent spiritual powers, such as the angels of the nations in some Jewish sources, we have another example of powers which are being destroyed in I Cor (15:24) aligned in Rom with the will of God. This was the case, perhaps, with the archons in I Cor 15:24 and Rom 13:3f. This is by no means certain, however.[1] Since it is doubtful, in any case, that Paul differentiated sharply between human and angelic wielders of power, his use of ἐξουσία cannot be cited as firm evidence for any conclusions about the angelic beings' functions.

Height and Depth (ὕψωμα, βάθος)

Paul employs the first of these terms in two places. In II Cor 10:4, it refers to the enemy to be destroyed in battle, when it lifts itself up against the knowledge of God.[2] Paul speaks of both in Rom 8:38 as part of the created world which might but will not separate believers from God. He does not refer to βάθος elsewhere without a modifier.[3] It may be that ὕψωμα comes to Paul's mind in writing II Cor 10:5, as he thinks of the self-exaltation of his opponents, and that the two terms together are very general ones which describe the universe in Rom 8:38. However, it is also possible that these images suggest astral powers and that they invoke a

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[1]For recent discussions, see Käsemann, "Principles of the Interpretation of Romans 13," New Testament Questions of Today, pp. 196-216, and A. Strobel, "Zum Verständnis vom Röm 13, ZNW 47 (1956), 67-93. I agree with the two critics that human rulers are in the forefront in this passage.

[2]By specifying the conditions under which the heights are enemies, Paul is in line with both Hellenistic and Jewish usage of ὕψος and ὑψόω. There is both true and false exaltation and these must be carefully distinguished. Cf. Bertram, on these words, TDNT, Vol. VIII, pp. 602-608.

[3]He uses the term in Rom 11:33; I Cor 2:10; 8:2.

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145 Gnostic-like circle of thought. Ὕψωμα is an astrological term.[1] The notion of descent and exaltation are prominent in Gnosticism,[2] and linked linguistically with ὕψωμα in Paul's quotation of the hymn in Phil 2:6-11 by the presence of the cognate ὑπερυψόω (vs. 9).[3]

Idol (εἴδωλον)

Apart from Paul's discussion of idols and meat sacrificed to them, in I Cor 8 and 10, he speaks of them in I Th 1:9; I Cor 12:2; Rom 2:22. He inveighs against idolatry in Gal 5:20; and against idolators in I Cor 5:10,11; 6:9. Of these references, only the first two are helpful in this study. In I Th 1:9, Paul reminds his readers that they turned away (ἐπιστρέφω) from idols to serve (δουλόω) the true and living God. The idols by implication were false and dead. It is to be noted that Paul does not speak of anyone serving idols. In I Cor 12:2, the Corinthians were led astray to idols; it was not the idols which did the leading. They were dumb, a description which comes to mind because Paul begins to discuss speaking in the Spirit. That is, those who say, "Jesus be cursed!" do not do so at the bidding of the idols.

In the discussion of idol meat (I Cor 8 and 10), Paul denies the real existence of idols (8:4; 10:19f).[4] That is not the issue. In all

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[1] Bertram, op. cit., p. 614, n. 4, cites Reitzenstein, Poimandres, p. 80, n. 3, where examples are given.

[2] Bertram, op. cit., p. 605.

[3] I take this hymn to be influenced by Gnostic thought, with Ernst Lohmeyer, Kyrio Jesus, Sitzungsber. d. Heidelberger Akad. D. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Klasse, 1927/28 Nr. 4, and other critics.

[4] I take Hurd's reconstruction of the dialogue on this issue to be substantially correct. Cf. pp. 115-147. Specifically, I think it is right to say that in I Cor 8:4 Paul quotes the Corinthians who are in turn quoting him.

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146 of these texts, Paul speaks as the rightful inheritor of the LXX and Jewish tradition, which dealt with idols by denying their existence and so, their power.[1] He speaks out of the same tradition in 10:7 and 14, in directing his readers to avoid idolatry. This he does because God does not tolerate the worship of any other thing. The worship of idols may have terrible consequences because to do that is to test and provoke God (10:9, 22).

One can say, therefore, that God is the opponent of the idols, but it is not quite correct to say the reverse. Since they do not exist, they are not, in themselves, for or against anyone. Their only power is that which men give, not to say, impose on them. This is in line with Paul's argument about the 'weaker brother' in I Cor 8: He is in real danger not from the idols but from his own attitude toward them (his 'conscience').

Demons (δαιμονία)

Paul speaks of demons only in I Cor 10:20, 21, in connection with the discussion of idol meat. In his third argument[2] against eating it, he relates it to the Lord's Supper, making the two kinds of eating represent two spheres of power, exclusive of one another.

In this discussion, the idols and demons are alike, in that (vs. 18) one becomes the partner of either in participating in the meal, and (vs. 20) in that both stand in opposition to God and both 'provoke' Him (vss. 9, 22). But they are unlike in that the idols are nothing really, and therefore no threat, no problem; the demons are real and, by implication, dangerous.

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[1] Cf. Büchsel, TWNT, Vol. II, p. 377.

[2] The first argument is that about the 'weaker brother' and his conscience, I Cor 8. The second has to do with God's intolerance of idolatry, I Cor 10:1-11.

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147 I Cor 8:5 needs consideration in this connection. Paul speaks in two ways about the 'many lords and many gods' of this verse. They are 'so-called' (λεγόμενοι) and so, like the idols, with no reality. He follows this comment (perhaps another quote from the Corinthians) with what amounts to a repetition of the earlier comment, without the qualifying 'so-called.' Paul seems to be saying, "Of course, we are not threatened by imaginary lords and gods as the pagans are; we know there is one God and one Lord. But there are 'lords' and 'gods' which threaten anyone who thinks he is above all this (10:12). There is need to be careful."

The 'many lords and many gods' are like the demons. They are distinct from the idols, the 'so-called lords and gods.' The same words are used for both, but that does not change the fact that some are real and others are not.

World Elements (στοιχεῖα)[1]

Paul regards the world elements, mentioned in Gal 4:3, 9, in somewhat the same way he thinks of idols. Their dominion over believers is ended, from his point of view (vs. 3). He likens them to 'beings which by nature are no gods' in vs. 8. He calls them 'poor and weak' (vs. 9). His readers, however, do not think of them as Paul does. Rather, the world elements appear to them as threatening angelic (probably astral) powers.[2]

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[1]I use Marxsen's translation, Introduction, p. 51, as it seems to be more literal than the RSV's 'elemental spirits' and does not prejudge the results of exegesis.

[2]Paul makes the emphatic point that the world elements are like the 'no gods' which enslaved his readers before conversion, in vs. 9, by twice using the word 'again.' "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now...how can you turn

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148 The most important evidence for this position about the Galatian Christians and Paul's opponents there is found in Col 2:20. Here the author identifies baptism with dying to the elements, and therefore with the exclusion of practices which follow from belief in the power of the elements. The prohibitions cited in vs. 21 are called 'commandments and teachings of men,' in vs. 22. Col 2:8 speaks of 'philosophy and empty deceit,' which may victimize the unwary, as being 'according to the tradition of men, according to the world elements.' These are set in opposition to Christ. For the author of Col, then, the teaching about the world elements and true faith in Christ are mutually exclusive.

In Colossae, the teaching about the world elements includes injunctions about diet (2:16, 21) calendric observances (2:16), the reverence of angels (2:18, possibly the equivalent of the world elements[1]). Probably the proponents of this view also required circumcision (2:11), suggesting that they were Jewish.[2]

The links with Gal are strong, if not entirely consistent.[3] Paul certainly opposes men who want the Galatians to be circumcised (6:12 and

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back again to the weak and poor world elements, whose slaves you want to be again?" Paul's readers have probably not made that connection. Contrast the agreement between Paul and (some of) the Corinthians, I Cor 8:4: "... we know that 'an idol has no existence'...."

[1]See Schlier's commentary, p. 192f. for evidence of the association of angels and stars in Jewish sources.

[2]The view opposed by the author of Col may have included reverence/fear of the rulers and authorities (ἀρχαί, ἐξουσίαι), understood as angelic, perhaps astral, beings. They are mentioned in 1:16; 2:10, 15. I think it is more likely, however, that these are the author's own designations (suggested to him by I Cor 15:24, perhaps), because they are in all three texts included in the realm of Christ. The world elements are not; they are completely excluded.

[3]There is no mention of the worship of angels in Gal. Paul would hardly speak of them as he does in 1:8 and 4:14, if this were a problem.

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149 elsewhere), who commend certain calendric observances (4:10). Gal 2:12 may also offer some slight indication that dietary regulations were involved.

While there are similarities in Paul's view of the idols and the world elements, there is also an important difference. The elements, unlike the idols, appear to have had power once, but do not in the present. In a very bold statement (4:3), he says, "...we were slaves to the world elements." He is at the climax of a long argument (3:6-4:7) in which he has denigrated Jewish Law: In 3:17, the Law came after the Promise, and so is inferior.[1] In 3:19, it was given (or transmitted) by angels through a mediator, and so is inferior. In 3:24, it served for a period as the disciplinarian of the child, and so is not needed by the adult. In 4:1-3, the child has become a slave, under the dominion of guardians, trustees, world elements. Paul thus makes the Law in the present (3:25, "now that faith has come"; 4:4, "when the time had fully come..."), the virtual equivalent of the powers which enslave the pagans. He declares both obsolete for the believer. Now, the world elements are like the idols which once dominated men who did not know the love of God, they are weak and poor. In fact, they are powerless, in and of themselves.

Thus, the elements are not, in Paul's view, like the rulers, authorities, powers, heights, or demons. The latter are real entities which exercise real (though limited) dominion in the present, and which are in the process of being destroyed (I Cor 15:24). Whereas Paul speaks contemptuously of the elements, he never so refers to the rulers and authorities. The world elements, however, are also not identical with the idols, the 'so-called lords and gods' (I Cor 8:5), the 'belly' (Rom 15:18, Phil 3:19),

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[1]This is a Gnostic argument. Cf. Meyer, "Jn 2:10," JBL 86 (1967), 191-197.

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150 or the 'earthly things' (Phil 3:19). The latter have never had real power of their own. Rather, the elements seem to stand somewhere between these two orders of created beings.

Other Designations of Power

One of the other two designations connected with this inquiry is found in I Cor 2:12, 'the spirit of the world.' Paul's attention is fixed on the Spirit of God, to which this term is contrasted. One can suggest links with the archons of this age, in I Cor 2:6, and with the men who are not spiritual but σαρκικοί in I Cor 3:3; the ψυχικός man of 2:14. But this does not add appreciably to our understanding of the spirit of the world. This is because Paul is not interested in such a being, may not even think of it as a spiritual being. The expression is there only to provide an antithetical parallel to the Spirit which is from God. Paul wants to say, in this somewhat dubious argument, that the Corinthians who think themselves spiritual are not so. Even if, at this early stage in the Corinthian correspondence, Paul answers a charge that he is unspiritual (as he must, later, in II Cor 10-13), he was not accused of having something called 'the spirit of the world,' but of being σαρκικός or ψυχικός. Whatever Paul means by speaking of the spirit of the world, he is not here referring to an angelic being who exercises power.

The final designation, in Phil 2:10-11, is found at the end of the Philippian hymn. Paul is quoting here.[1] The poetic figures (every knee, every tongue) includes beings which are both human ('on earth') and angelic ('in heaven'). The hymn cites Is 45:23, which does not include references

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[1] I am dependent here on the line of analysis begun by Lohmeyer; see fn 3, p. 149.

151 to heaven, earth, and beneath the earth. The exaltation of Jesus above all human and angelic beings, and their recognition of him, is clear. That there are angelic powers to be either defeated (as in I Cor 15:24) or reconciled (as implied in Col and Eph) follows. They are, then, like those mentioned in Rom 8:38-39, potentially inimical.

The Absence of the Powers

Apart from the reference to idols in the rhetorical verse 2:22, there is no mention of any of the powers in Romans until 8:38-39. One might have expected some allusion (especially, perhaps, to Satan, the tempter) in 1:18-3:20, where Paul speaks of both Jew and Gentile going astray. On closer inspection of the whole epistle, however, especially chs. 5-8, the reason for the absence becomes clear. Paul wishes to speak about the power of sin and death to enslave men. In the very large picture of this fundamental human and cosmic predicament which Paul draws, the powers would have been superfluous. I do not mean that Paul deliberately excludes mention of them, but rather that, with his eye fixed on the power of sin and death over men, they simply do not come to mind.

It is not, however, correct to conclude from this that sin and death have taken the place formerly occupied by angelic/demonic powers. The mention of them in Rom 8:38-39 shows that this is not so.

When the modern reader comes to Rom 14:1-15:13 after reading Gal 4:1-11 and I Cor 8 and 10, he is struck by the lack of any mention of powers in relation to the issues of diet and observance of days. In the former matter, Paul has used demons in contrast to idols to support his view that idol meat should not be eaten thoughtlessly. In the context of his discussion of the latter, he has spoken of enslavement to the 'no-gods' and world

152 elements. In both cases, however, the powers did not receive primary attention in relation to these problems. In Gal, the real danger comes from the Law; in I Cor, the real argument on idol meat has to do with the 'weaker brother,' as it does in Rom.

More significant, I think, is the absence of any mention of the powers in the passages where Paul speaks most powerfully of his suffering. In I Th 2:18, it may be that Satan hindered Paul's going to Thessalonica by causing a flare-up in Paul's illness; this 'thorn' being, as he says in II Cor 12:7, an angel of Satan. In the passages where Paul speaks about his sufferings, however, there is no mention at all of Satan's activity. I refer to I Cor 4:8ff; II Cor 4:7ff; 6:4-10 and 11:23-28. The powers do not humiliate, persecute, starve, and shipwreck Paul.[1] This is surprising. Even with the recognition that for Paul the human predicament is caused by sin and death, and especially in light of II Cor 12:7, one expects the powers to be blamed for at least some misfortunes. Together with the fact that the powers really do very little, according to Paul, their absence in the suffering passages reinforces the impression that they do not occupy center stage in Paul's thought.

Distribution of References to the Powers

When one asked about the functions of the powers in each epistle, taken as a whole, some possibilities for interpretation appear, but the peripheral status of these beings remains.

In I Th, Satan both prevents Paul's intended visit and may tempt the church from its firm faith. The idols belong to the past; the

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[1] I Cor 4:9 speaks of angels, but only as witnesses to the apostle's humiliation.

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153 archangel serves strictly as the servant of God. Even Satan is not the source of danger, however.[1]

In Gal, the angels function only hypothetically in the present. The 'no-gods' (the equivalent of idols) and the world elements threaten to enslave again, but they do not do so with power of their own. They belong to the past.

I and II Cor contain together by far the greatest number of references to the powers. The angels have no active function. Satan is active: he tempts (I Cor 7:5); he has strategems (II Cor 2:11); Paul's thorn is his angel (II Cor 12:2); he disguises himself as his opposite and leads human servants (II Cor 11:14f). The idols do not threaten but the demons do. The rulers, authorities, and powers exercise power in the present, but apart from having killed Jesus (in the past), we are not told what they do. In I Cor 15:24, their presence appears to serve primarily as an analogy to the real enemy, death. There are many lords and many gods mentioned in these two epistles, but in no case does Paul dwell on them at any length.

The same is true of Rom and Phil, where the references are very few. In neither epistle do they have active functions nor are they the dangers about which Paul is concerned.

Conclusion

Several things are clear in relation to Paul's references to the powers. First, they all belong to the created order over which God himself stands. Any powers which are inimical to his purposes are being destroyed;

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[1] See the discussion on Satan in the section on I Th of the previous chapter.

154 they have no future. Second, Paul speaks much more often about those beings which have a long history in the OT (angels, Satan, idols); much less frequently about other powers.

Third, the designation for these powers is very diverse. Some terms are interchangeable; there are no fixed formulas. Many of the powers have ambiguous roles, sometimes they act as God's servants; sometimes they stand against him. The line between angelic and human agents is not always clear. In part, the diversity may be accounted for by the different audiences Paul addresses. For example, the Corinthian correspondence speaks much more often of the powers in part because Paul wants to insist with exalted readers that they are not yet beyond the dangers of normal human life (in the argument about the table of demons, in I Cor 15:24, in the reference to 'many lords and many gods').

The diverse terms can, however, be ordered by drawing a distinction between those things which are active and exercise power in the present and those which do not have power (or in some cases, reality) in themselves, but only enslave as human beings impose power on them. In the first group are:

Satan

angels

rulers (ἀρχαί and ἄρχοντες)

authorities

powers

demons

lords and gods

heights

155 Perhaps to this list should be added also the 'god of this world,' of II Cor 4:4, and the 'things which are,' of I Cor 1:28.

In the second list are the following:

idols

beings that are by nature no gods

world elements

so-called lords and gods.

Perhaps to this list should be added also the 'belly,' of Rom 16:18 and Phil 3:19. In the case of the second group, there is no valid reason for believers to be concerned about them -- they do not exist, they have no power over men. It is part of Paul's gospel that the power men feel these things have is an illusion.

While I think the above distinction is true to Paul, it gives an impression, perhaps, of precision about his views of the powers which is misleading. The line which divides the two lists is blurred at points. The world elements have no power of their own in the present, but they had in the past and perhaps they continue to exist for Paul. While he agrees with the Corinthians about the irrelevance of the 'so-called lords and gods,' he speaks of other 'lords and gods,' of whom one must beware.

Even in the case of the first list, the power exercised is limited. The man Paul speaks about in I Cor 5:5 must be delivered to Satan in order for him to destroy the man's flesh. He is delivered by the church. The 'god of this world' may blind people, but they may 'turn to the Lord.' More important is the fact that, on the one hand, the powers do so little and, on the other, that what they do is at points both beneficial and inimical to men.

156 The diversity, ambiguity, and peripheral importance of the powers in Paul's thought comes to its clearest expression in Rom 8:38-39. There angelic powers are listed with such non-spiritual realities as 'things present' and 'things to come.' The ἀρχαί may be human or spiritual or both. 'Height' and 'depth' may be purely figurative expressions, used to add to the contrasts, or they may be powers. The 'powers' (δύναμεις) mentioned at the end of vs. 38 stand without a parallel term, suggesting that Paul does want to speak in part about angelic, inimical beings. The verses remind one of I Cor 3:21-22, where there is no indication of the powers.

Rom 8:38-39 is a piling up of imagery to suggest the outer reaches of created reality, within which there is nothing -- angelic, human, or natural -- which finally threatens the believer. These images stand in contrast to those in Rom 8:35 ('tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword'). The same issue is at stake in relation to both lists, namely: can anything separate us from the love of God? In Rom 8:35, the elements listed are the names of experiences normal to human life (Paul's, anyway). In contrast, the elements listed in vss. 38-39 bring to expression a poetic, rhapsodic description of the whole of creation.

The 'lords and gods' were certainly real to Paul and clearly at points inimical and dangerous. He refers to them in various ways, depending on whom he is addressing. He warns the Corinthians not to underestimate the power of the demons and tells the Galatians they are foolish to fear the weak and poor world elements. He is on his guard but not frightened of Satan. He understands himself and his fellow Christians to be superconquerors (Rom 8:37) now over all the principalities and powers, because believers share in the greater power of God through Christ.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

How did Paul experience and interpret power in the present? He everywhere affirms the power of God in Christ Jesus which he sees overcoming, nullifying the powers which stand against Him. The ambiguity which underlies all the ambiguities noted in this study stems from the operation of two opposing realms of powers in the world, neither of which is clearly and completely triumphant in the present. Believers live now not only in the sphere of God's power, but also still in the opposing sphere of power. Moreover, the boundary which divides one from the other is difficult to discern.

On the one hand, Paul struggles for clarity. He repeatedly tries clearly to identify for his readers the ways in which the power of God is available to them. He says again and again, "Do not misunderstand the alternatives open to you. Do not overlook the power God offers you." On the other hand, he continually opposes what he regards as false clarity, the premature resolution of certain tensions and problems which characterize present reality. He says again and again, "Do not oversimplify. Keep all the factors in mind."

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The Power of God and the Power of Death

When we first meet Paul (in I Th), his understanding of the power of death seems simple and clear. The resurrection of Christ and the impending parousia mean that death has been overcome for the believer. He will not die. When some Christians die, Paul teaches the resurrection of the dead, assuring his readers that those who have 'slept' will not be left out of the Kingdom (I Th 4:13-18). When these deaths raised questions about the parousia (When will he come? Why has he not come yet?), Paul answers (I Th 5:1-11) by repeating what they already know. The Day will come suddenly, without warning, soon. He goes on to speak about life in the present, saying in effect, "Use the protection you have been given. You are safe. Only live according to the salvation which has been prepared for you."

The physical death of some in the church did not cause Paul to revise his view that in raising Jesus from the dead, God had abolished death for those who are in Christ.[1] As this study has suggested, however,[2] ambiguity and complexity reach their peak in Paul's writings when he speaks about death: It is (with sin) the power which continues to function in the realm opposed to God (Rom 5-6). It is the final enemy to be defeated, analogous to but more terrible than the principalities and powers Christ fights in the present (I Cor 15:24-26). It is punishment for sin (I Cor 5:3-5; 11:29-30; Rom 6:23). It is the constant threat in the midst of

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[1] See fn 1, p. 63 , for the comment on II Cor 5:1ff. I think Paul writes of the possibility of his own death only in Phil 1:21-24, near the end of his ministry.

[2] See especially the discussions on death in Ch II, pp. 43-46, 62-65.

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159 life (I Cor 1:8-10; Phil 2:26-27). It is the daily experience of the apostle (I Cor 15:31) and perhaps, for Paul, an inescapable daily reality for all men (I Cor 15:22). Sometimes it is linked with Jesus' death and understood positively (Rom 6:5-11); sometimes it stands in sharp contrast to the life-giving Lord (I Cor 15:22). It is the means by which believers give life to each other (II Cor 4:10-12; 7:3). In terms of the two opposing spheres of power operative in the present, death is both the power which stands against God and, paradoxically, an instrument in God's realm for the defeat of death.

In order to understand Paul's many and varied references to death, I think we must look at his life, at what happened to him. The apostle to the Gentiles, trained as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5), advanced in Judaism and zealous for the traditions of the fathers prior to his call (Gal 1:14), was apparently also unimpressive in preaching style (I Cor 1:17; 2:1; II Cor 11:6) and in appearance (II Cor 10:1, 10). He was probably plagued by a debilitating disease.[1] He was persecuted by the Jews (I Th 2:15-16; Gal 5:11). His ministry to the Gentiles was undermined by other Christian apostles who attacked him personally (Gal 1:10; II Cor 10-13) and discredited the gospel he preached at least as defective and perhaps as false (Gal 1:8-9; II Cor 11:4).

Paul's experience of the power of God in Jesus Christ was first of all, in the face of many difficulties and his own apparent inadequacies, the fact that the Gentiles accepted the Gospel, that churches came into

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[1]See II Cor 12:7; Gal 4:13-14. Whether or not the 'thorn' was an illness, the second text certainly refers to a physical malady. See also I Th 2:18; Rom 1:13; 15:22. It may be that Paul was 'hindered' in his travel plans by a recurrent disease.

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160 existence (I Th 1:4-5; Gal 3:1-2; I Cor 2:1-5; and especially II Cor 10:13-18). The creation of churches was accompanied by extraordinary events (II Cor 11:12; Rom 15:19) and the new Christians received striking spiritual gifts (I Cor 1:5, 7 and elsewhere), but the power Paul saw at work was primarily the force which turned people away from previous slaveries (I Th 1:9; Gal 1:4) and created what might be called today a liberated zone (II Cor 10:13-18).

In these events God revealed his power. The fact that Paul survived at all was a miracle (II Cor 1:8-10). The creation of churches could not be credited to a man of his personal inadequacies (II Cor 2:14-17). These, together with the misfortunes which beset him (II Cor 11:23ff) and the opposition he faced from fellow apostles and churches alike, hardly qualified him as a great charismatic leader whose personal strength won people over to his message. The power which brought churches into being obviously was not his, but God's.

Paul begins to speak in a highly ambiguous way about the continuing power of death and about its positive function when some Corinthian Christians look down on Christ's death as foolishness and reject as superfluous to them a notion of the resurrection of the dead. He opposes what he regards as false distinctions, a premature resolution of the tensions of present life. These Corinthians understand themselves to be, in identification with the risen Lord, essentially beyond death. They are <u>now</u> exalted, 'kings' (I Cor 4:8), as Christ is.

To the Corinthians, Paul first insists on the continuing power of death. He also does not expect to die, but this does not mean that in the present death has no effect on him and them. Death is not just physical

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161 dying. It is a power analogous to the still operative principalities and powers (I Cor 15:24). These with death are as yet not fully defeated by the risen Lord; he is fighting them in the present. So those who are of Christ are certainly not beyond their influence. The battle going on creates a highly ambiguous and dangerous situation. The gifts of the Spirit, which are signs of the power of God among them, do not guarantee protection against the power of death (I Cor 11:30). By using death as a metaphor to describe his suffering (I Cor 4:9; 15:31), Paul identifies concretely the way the continuing power of death is experienced. He says in effect, "If that is not your experience, then you do not understand what time it is. It is not yet glory-time."

Second, Paul opposes the false and premature resolution of the ambiguity of death by speaking of it as a weapon in God's sphere for the defeat of the enemy death. To die daily is to carry in the body the death of Jesus, to be given up always to death for Jesus' sake. The result of this dying is that the life of Jesus is manifested (II Cor 4:10-11) and life is powerfully at work (ἐνεργέω) 'in you' (II Cor 4:12). That is, the believer whose life is a continual dying gives life to others by his death. In so doing, he participates in Christ's battle against death. This understanding of suffering is echoed in Paul's reference to Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25). The one who suffers and risks death in the service of the gospel is a soldier.

It is the link, historically and conceptually, between Christ's death and resurrection and Paul's daily experience of death and yet survival which undergirded his position. Christ had suffered, been humiliated and killed. Paul's life (not the Corinthians') follows that pattern.

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162 Christ was raised from the dead, the life-giver. He now fights against still powerful enemies, the last of which is death. He will give full life to his own when he has defeated death. The present time for the believer is dying-time, which is also, paradoxically, a time when life is repeatedly given.

Paul does not speak of the Christian life as dying daily outside the Corinthian letters. He does speak, especially in Romans, of the continuing power of death in the present. His attention is focused on the problem of sin,[1] as he attempts to answer questions about sin in relation to the law (3:5; 6:1, 15; 9:19). Death in Romans is consistently the consequence and partner of sin. It is a power over against the power of God. It functions in two ways to clarify the ambiguity of life in the present.

First, as the consequence and partner of sin, it helps Paul to characterize the sphere of power opposed to God (Rom 5:12-21; 6:23; 7:11). Second, the death of the Christian, his baptism into Christ's death (Rom 6:2-11), is for Paul his shift from the sphere of sin and death into the sphere of God. In the face of questioners who worry that the end of the law means approval for sinning, Paul says in effect, "No, you have not understood what sin is. It is a power alien to men, inimical to them, which ruled a sphere in which death was the reward. By dying with Christ in baptism, we enter a sphere free of the power of sin, characterized by life, instead of death. There are two places and only two. Choose the one where sin no longer reigns and you will live."

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[1]That Paul is chiefly interested in sin rather than death in Romans is suggested not only by the questions from hypothetical Jewish debaters (Rom 3:7,8 and elsewhere) but also by the fact that in 5:12, where he is presumably quoting Wis 2:24, "death came into the world," Paul has altered the Wis text to read, "sin came into the world."

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The Power of God and the Power of Sin

A sphere free of the power of sin? Does Paul believe there is such a place? Grant him his spatial metaphor: sin is not the evil impulse within man which he will obey if he can escape punishment; it is, rather, an alien power which is prior to him, which invaded him as a conquering army, took him captive (Rom 7:23), and killed him (Rom 7:11).[1] Grant also that by Christ's death and resurrection and the Christian's baptism, the absolute tyranny of sin's reign has been broken and people are no longer slaves in its realm. Have we then so entered the sphere of God's grace that sin no longer has any power over us? Well, yes and no. In dealing with sin (he does not always use the word), Paul tries repeatedly to draw a clear line between the opposing spheres of power. He also sticks to the irreducible ambiguities about sin against those who want more clarity than life in the present gives.

I think for Paul the continuing power of sin makes its impact primarily in its power to deceive. Satan pretends to be an angel of light (II Cor 11:14). False brethren may lead astray as the serpent deceived Eve (II Cor 11:3). The weak and poor world elements pretend to a power they do not have (Gal 4:9). Paul wants his readers to identify and appropriate the power of God which is more powerful than the power of sin.

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[1]The apparent paradox, between a reigning, enslaving sin and human responsibility for sinning, is a question at least as old as the Jewish objections Paul cites in 3:5; 9:19. Paul's answer following these texts is, in effect, that God is God. As many have observed, he also relates human sinning to the reign of sin, especially in Rom 5:12. However one resolves the problem of coherence in conception, generations of people have echoed the description of the experience which Paul gives: I can choose to resist sin and am under obligation to do so; nevertheless, the good that I would do, I am unable to do.

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164 The motifs examined in this study suggest that Paul struggled against the deception of sin in relation to two very important questions:[1] What time is it? Where is the power of God operative in the present?

Sin as Deception and the Temporal Question

In the Thessalonian church, the death of some members of the congregation (and probably also the severe persecution, I Th 2:14f; 3:3f) raised doubts about the coming Day. Was it really coming soon? Was Paul right about what time it is? In answer, Paul repeats what he has already taught them about the time (I Th 5:1-3, 9-10), saying in effect, "No, what has happened to you does not change the situation. The death and resurrection of Jesus mean that those who have slept will not be left out ((I Th 4:14). Do not let appearances unsettle you. Wear the sure hope of salvation as a helmet; it will protect you in the present."[2]

Different readings of the present were at the heart of the problems in Galatia. If Christians there were induced to circumcision, to fear and worship of the poor and weak world elements, then they had, from Paul's point of view, badly misunderstood the signs of the time. For Christ's death had delivered them from 'the present evil age' (1:4; 3:1, 13; 4:4). That is the end of slavery and the beginning of freedom (2:4; 4:7; 5:1). Slavery and freedom represent two spheres which co-exist in the present,

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[1]What follows is not, of course, meant to provide a complete survey of the ways Paul fought the power of sin, but only to pick up the threads of this thesis which are relevant to the problem of the power of sin.

[2]Given what happened when he wrote something similar to the Corinthians, I wonder if Paul satisfied the Thessalonians. I also wonder whether he looked back later, after things got really difficult in Galatia and Corinth, and thought that the problems in Thessalonica seemed like the good old days.

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165 to be sure (4:21-5:6). But they are, in the first place, temporally related. Slavery belongs to the past for anyone who will grasp the present offer of freedom. To 'turn back again' (4:9) is to act as if nothing important happened in Christ. The 'misunderstanding' is not for Paul an understandable human error which can be corrected by new teaching (as the problem about those who died in Thessalonica could). Behind it stands the power of sin to deceive. Gal 2:17-18 suggests that the opponents regard Paul as a sinner and, worse, one who makes Christ an agent of sin, because he does not require the Jewish law of the Gentile Christians (see also Gal 1:10). Paul claims that the reverse is true: to build up again an edifice, useful as it was (3:24), which is now obsolete -- that is transgression. It is sin precisely because it ignores the time, the shift of the ages which has in some sense occurred in Christ.

The problem in Corinth was, of course, the reverse. The fact that the Christians there regarded themselves as beyond death, already raised, meant that they were also beyond sin. The exalted Corinthians experienced power in their identification with the risen and spiritual Lord, in the abundance of spectacular spiritual gifts, in their sophisticated wisdom and powerful rhetoric. When the false apostles of II Cor arrived, with their impressive recommendations, spiritual power, and shining faces, they fit right into the congregation. For both the Corinthians and the visitors, the power operative among them was the power of God, triumphant over every other power.

From Paul's point of view, these 'robust Christians' engaged in all the worst sins. Gross immorality (5:1ff and 6:15ff) and flirtation with dangerous temptation (7:1ff and 10:14ff) resulted from (or were

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166 defended on the basis of) a false understanding of the present time as holding no dangers. It is no accident that Paul speaks more often about Satan, demons, 'lords and gods,' ' the god of this world,' archons and powers in these letters than elsewhere. He is trying to convince his readers that these still exercise power. It is precisely through their power to deceive the Corinthians into thinking they have no power that they may win.

More serious for Paul in terms of sin were the boasting and quarrelling of the Corinthians. The very spiritual gifts which were the signs of God's power in the church, signs of the turn of the ages, became the basis of boasting and the source of quarrelling. Paul did not have impressive resources for dealing with this situation. It was no easy task to convince the spirit-filled Corinthians that theirs was a false glory, that they had been deceived and were deceiving themselves. I suspect that Paul lost that battle in Corinth. What he tried to do was to stick to the ambiguity which he believed characterized life in the present. It is for me best indicated by the contrast in II Cor 10:3, "in the flesh but not according to the flesh" (ἐν σαρκὶ... οὐ κατὰ σάρκα). The Corinthians understood with Paul the notion of two spheres of power in the present. There was the sphere of the flesh and the sphere of the Spirit. What they did not accept was Paul's notion of the temporal relationship between these, that is, the idea that believers do not yet live wholly in the realm of the Spirit, although they no longer live wholly in the realm of the flesh. What's more, they had evidence on their side. How is one to understand the spiritual gifts which had transformed them, if not as the sign that they had moved from the sphere of the flesh into

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167 the realm of the Spirit? Paul agrees that believers no longer live according to the flesh. The obvious fact for him that they still live in the flesh, and the consequences of that for determining the time, do not appear to have convinced the Corinthians.

Romans 13:11-14 is the passage in the epistle which speaks most clearly about the power of sin in relation to the temporal question. Paul has written at length in chs. 5-8 about the power of sin vis-à-vis the power of God in the present. He has concluded this long section with the triumphant conviction that believers are super-conquerors now because nothing will be able to separate them from the love of God. In Rom 13:11-14, Paul's readers get a very clear statement about temporal process, about the fact that the passing of time is really accomplishing something in terms of the defeat of sin ('the works of darkness,' vs. 12). What is happening with the passing of time is that salvation comes nearer. The power of sin does not diminish as time moves along (or why would Paul tell presumably seasoned Christians to avoid obvious sins like debauchery and licentiousness?). To say that the night is far gone and the day at hand means not only that believers have the weapons of the future at their disposal in the present, but also that the temporal process itself belongs to the power of God. Those who 'groan inwardly' (Rom 8:23), who must don the armor of light repeatedly for the fight against sin, must not be deceived by its continuing power into believing the fight is endless. On the contrary, every day of battle brings the end of warfare closer.

Sin as Deception and Power in the Present

How did Paul see the power of God operative in the present against the power of sin? In Thessalonica, Paul feared that the Christian's faith

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might not prove strong enough to withstand the severe persecution they were enduring. In I Th 3:5, this danger to faith is linked to the Tempter's temptation. How are persecution and temptation related? I think the temptation has to do with sin's power to deceive. Faith may break under persecution if one believes the power of God active in the church is not strong enough to withstand the power which persecutes it.

There are problems related to brotherly love in the Thessalonian community (4:9ff and 5:12ff). Dissension in the church is everywhere regarded by Paul as a mark of sin and disobedience. I Cor 2:10-11, with its warning to forgive an offender to prevent Satan, with his wiles, "from gaining the advantage over us," suggests that sin's power to deceive may stand behind lovelessness in the church. Christians may think there are issues more important than mutual love (look what happened in Corinth!) and so succumb to the enemy.

As Paul calls the Thessalonians whose hope is shaken by deaths in the community to don this very hope as a helmet, so he bids them to put on the breastplate of faith and love. These are their protection against the power of sin, because they represent their appropriation of the power of God, powerfully at work among them (1:5; 2:13; 5:24).

With what I have already said above about the situation in Corinth as background, the issue of the power of God at present operative against the power of sin seems to me to be linked with the development I noted[1] in Paul's use of battle imagery. I refer to his revision of the argument about God's power and the believer's weakness. In I Cor 15:25, Christ is the warrior king who fights to defeat God's enemies; in II Cor 6:7 and

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[1]See the conclusion of Ch. II, pp. 125-126.

169 and 10:3-6, believers fight. The apostle who in I Cor 9:7 claims his right to soldier's pay only to renounce it, in II Cor 11:8, takes it as plunder in order to fulfill his ministry. The apostle who used himself as an example for the Corinthians to follow, a weak and unimpressive man whose dying daily made him transparent to the power of God, discovered that his own arguments were used against him by some who had no intention of being weak or of dying. Against those who understood the present as glory-time, Paul now adds to his notion of dying daily the image of the apostle-warrior. The present is also fighting-time.

The protective armor of I Th 5:8 has in II Cor 6:7 become the weapons not only of defense but of offense. The weapons of righteousness are for Paul purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, genuine love, and truthful speech--those things which he claims commend the servant of God (II Cor 6:6-7). The righteousness is, of course, not the servant's own, but God's. One way to speak about God's reconciliation of the world in Christ, as Paul does in II Cor 5:17-21, is to say that because God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, men might become the righteousness of God. That is the righteousness available to the believer, providing him with weapons. More important for our purposes at the moment, is the association in II Cor 6:7 of the weapons of righteousness with the power of God:[1] in the sphere of God's power, righteousness, now available to men because of Christ, provides weapons to do battle against the enemy sin.

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[1]See the discussion on II Cor 6:3-10 in Ch. II, pp. 52-56, and especially the argument about Paul's choice of prepositions in these verses.

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170 The association of weapons with the power of God is even clearer in II Cor 10:3-6. There the power of God itself is the weapon and there is no doubt at all about the fact that there is a war going on. What Paul claims he and his colleagues do in warfare is what elsewhere he says only of God. They destroy the 'heights' (cf. I Cor 15:24). They condemn disobedience (cf. I Cor 4:4-5). This passage also signals a shift in Paul's notion about the enemy, or perhaps an expansion of that notion. To destroy sophistries and to take captive thoughts indicates that Paul has learned something about how insidious the power of sin can be. It can lead thoughts astray (II Cor 11:3) and so undermine the church. That is, it can so deceive believers that they focus on the wrong issues, worry about the wrong things. Attention is directed away from the real battle and the believers as troops cease to fight. The beachhead which is the little church, used by God to bring to naught the powerful 'things that are' (I Cor 1:26-28), can be lost because soldiers forget that they are soldiers, and disobey orders (II Cor 10:6). In this situation, Paul threatens the Corinthian church (II Cor 10:1-4) by saying that he will deal with them according to the power of God. He is speaking presumably about his apostolic authority. But he does not tell us exactly what he intends to do. Obviously, he hopes that he will not have to discipline the church (13:10). One wonders what power his apostolic status gave him among those who plainly did not respect it. It is these considerations which make me think Paul may have lost the battle in Corinth.

In Romans 6:13 the members of one's body have become the weapons of righteousness or of unrighteousness. That is, human beings are themselves weapons on one side or the other of the battle. This way of

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171 speaking is Paul's attempt to insist on clarity: there are two choices and only two. You can choose sin or God; death (6:23) or life; that which is passing away or that which has a future (13:11-14). Sin's power to deceive in this connection is reflected in the questions put to Paul about the law (6:15 and elsewhere): how is sin to be controlled if there is no law? Paul's answer, that there is a new place to stand which is free of the power of sin, underlies the command to be a weapon of righteousness.

However, Paul had learned too much from his struggle in Corinth to allow this necessary clarity to stand without qualification. "...Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God," he says, in Rom 6:11. Are believers dead to sin or not? There is no clear 'yes' or 'no' in Paul on this question. You will be free of sin's dominion (6:14), you can now present your members as weapons of righteousness, if you consider yourself dead to sin. That is what the Corinthians did. He would not have written Rom 6:11 to them. But to readers who were nervous about sin uncontrolled by law, Paul says, "Of course sin continues to have power. But there is power to overcome sin. If you understand yourself to belong to God's sphere (and if you live according to that understanding) you will discover that the power of sin is really broken."

People are no longer only victims, the pawns of powerful forces they cannot control. Neither are they yet rulers. Now they are cautious and confident participants in the struggle in progress. To belong to the sphere of God means to watch warily to be certain one has not slipped over to the enemy's side. It means to choose over and over to belong to the sphere of righteousness and life. It means to suffer and endure. To

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172 be participants means more than that, however. It means being a soldier, one who not only must fight, but who <u>can</u> fight. The liberation God has already given is freedom to fight; the power He has made available in the present provides the weapons soldiers need in order confidently to fight.

> Yield yourselves to God as men who
> have been brought from death to life,
> and your members to God as weapons of
> righteousness.

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